Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

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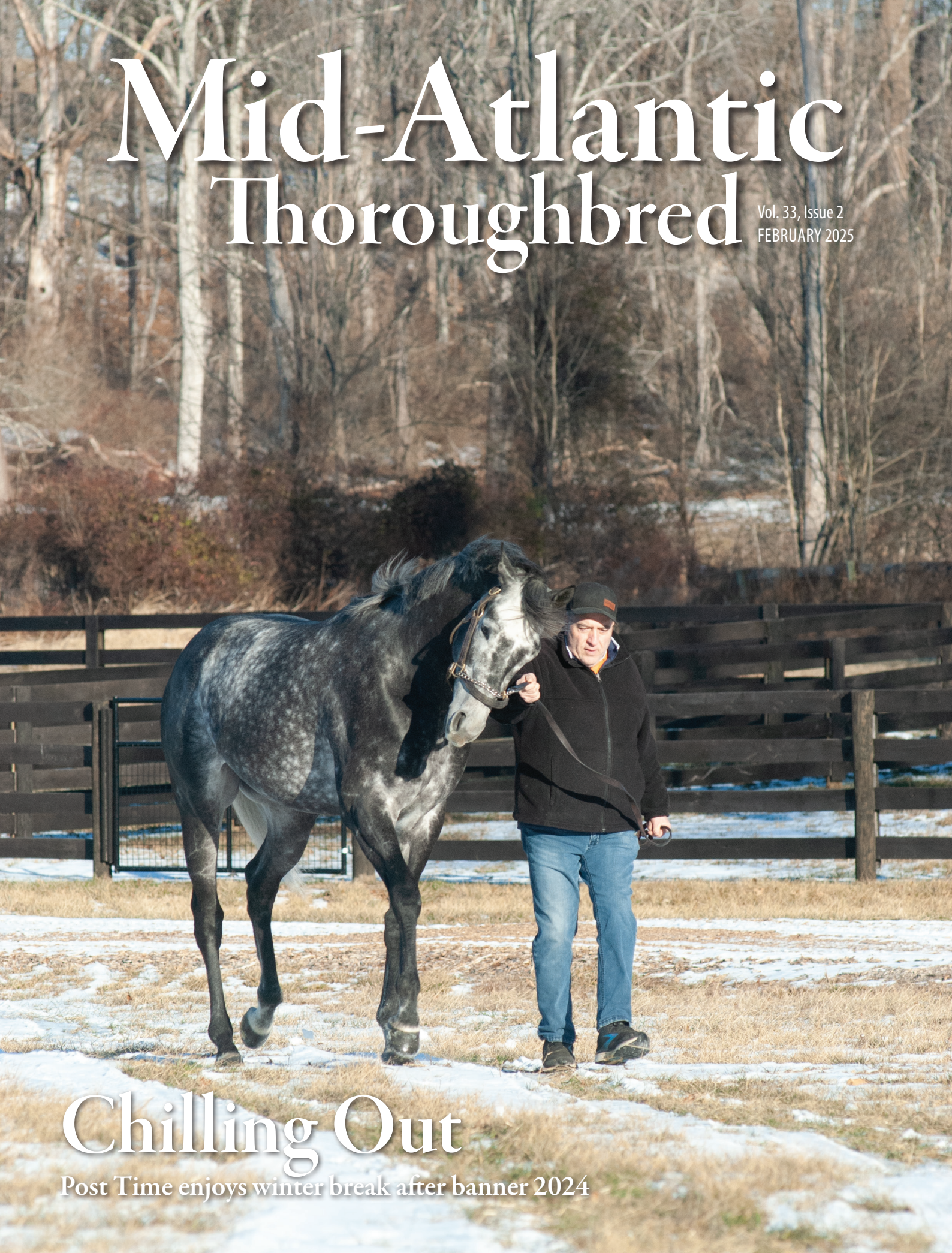

Chilling Out

Post Time enjoys winter break after banner 2024

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Tapit–Precious Kitten, by Catienus

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Jim McCue

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Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

— Set List —

A Very Good Year: Region's stars were bright in 2024

A team of writers takes a look back – and forward – at some of the standout regional-bred horses of 2024 and what they might be up to in 2025. From Book'em Danno to Volleyballprincess, we catch up with as many as we can. Page 30

Snow Going: Knauf leads new Maryland operator

Maryland racing turned a page with the official launch of a new version of The Maryland Jockey Club, headed by former Monmouth Park executive Bill Knauf. By Joe Clancy. Page 48

Couple of Aces: Runcos enjoy banner 2024

Thanks to Coastal Mission and a slew of others, Jeff and Susan Runco enjoy a successful season from their West Virginia base. By Paul Halloran. Page 56

Loose Rein: Remembering Hank Allen

Known for winning races, slugging softballs and telling the occasional tale, the late trainer Hank Allen made his mark in the Mid-Atlantic as the trainer of Northern Wolf and other standouts. By Vinnie Perrone. Page 62

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On our cover: The Mid-Atlantic's top runner, Post Time, heads back to the barn at his off-season home, Foxhall Equine, for Dean Wise. *Photo by Barrie B. Reightler.*

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$75,000 NOT FOR LOVE 4YO & Up, 6 Furlongs

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Engage (Into Mischief)
Friesan Fire (A.P. Indy)
Galawi (Ire) (Dubawi-Ire)
Holy Boss (Street Boss)
Kobe's Back (Flatter)
Mosler (War Front)
V. I. P. Ticket (Winsor Castle)
Warrant (Constitution)

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Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred

Volume 33, Issue 2

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PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN EQUINE MEDIA

UNDENIABLY the best stallion standing in the region

$101,930 Average earnings
Highest ranked in Mid-Atlantic

$76,535 Median earnings
Highest ranked in Mid-Atlantic–
Higher than any other 4th crop sire in N.A, among them GUN RUNNER

84% winners/starters
Highest ranked in Mid-Atlantic
Among 4th crop sires in N.A, higher than Gun Runner, Practical Joke, Keen Ice.

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and among 4th crop sires in N.A.

Lifetime figures through 2024

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Post Time

WINTER WONDERLAND. Delaware Park's stable area looked frosty during a chilly morning in January.

Hoofprints, Inc.

Say It Again

"We're going to work, but we don't call it work because we're going to a racetrack and we love the racetrack."
New Maryland Jockey Club president and general manager Bill Knauf, on the outlook of racetrack employees

"My dear boy, only the whale that comes to the surface gets harpooned."
Old advice about keeping a low profile in or out of racing

"I had another photo I submitted that I loved, but contests are contests. There are a lot of pictures I respected a ton that were just as worthy as mine was. There are a lot of people doing a lot of good work."
Photographer Scott Serio, about winning an Eclipse Award for an image from the October 2024 edition of Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred *(see editorial)*

"When Reelin N Dealin came in second in a stakes race first time out, I screamed like we won the Kentucky Derby."
Cristina Holmes, about the success from the first crop of her Bonner Hill Farms' stallion Pat On the Back

Go Figure

3.5 Percent decrease in total North American wagering handle on Thoroughbred racing in 2024 compared to 2023 according to figures released by Equibase in December. Bettors wagered $11.265 billion last year, compared to $11.655 billion in 2023. Total purses increased slightly while racing days (3,787), individual races (30,852) and starts (229,748) decreased by more than 2 percent each.

6,128,141 Dollars earned by the progeny of Great Notion in 2024. The Mid-Atlantic's leader is the first regional stallion to surpass $6 million since Not For Love in 2009. Both spent their entire careers at Northview Stallion Station in Chesapeake City, Md. Great Notion, 25, is booked full for his 21st season.

Names of the Month

Compiled by Lexi Danielson

Boh's N O's. The 4-year-old Maryland-bred filly was claimed by Bruno Schickedanz in August 2024, but originally raced for her breeder Charles Blanford. Her name is a nod to the Maryland beer Natty Boh, often enjoyed at an "O's" baseball game.

Luckbealadytonight. The 6-year-old Maryland-bred mare's name is a nod to the Frank Sinatra song and her bloodlines. The nine-time winner is by Bandbox out of the Any Given Saturday mare Any Given Chance.

You're the One. Teresa Beste's Pennsylvania-bred mare is out of Flirt Alert. She won an allowance at Penn National in October and was third at Parx Racing in December.

Dublshotofcourage. There's an 18-character limit on names so no room to spell Double correctly. This works though. The 4-year-old Maryland-bred Bourbon Courage gelding has won twice in 15 starts.

There's a warrant out there for your mare!

WARRANT

Constitution–Whisper Number, by First Samurai

GRADED STAKES-WINNING MILLIONAIRE SON OF

CONSTITUTION (TAPIT)

CONSTITUTION is a TOP 5 Leading Sire in North America for 2024, second leading sire of 2YOs in North America for 2023 (to Justify), is the sire of 2024 TOP 5 freshman sire **TIZ THE LAW** (from his first crop) and is sire of **AMERICANREVOLUTION**, the top-booking stallion in New York for 2024. In his first season at stud, **WARRANT** was the top-booking stallion in PA in 2024. The only Constitution at stud in the region.

WARRANT earned $1.1 million in three seasons. On the board in 17 of 19 starts, winning from 6 fur. to 1½ miles, with 11 stakes wins or placings at classic distances, including G1 Santa Anita H (recorded a 104 Beyer), G2 Brooklyn S, G3 Oklahoma Derby, G3 Louisiana S, G3 West Virginia Derby, and G3 Prairie Meadow Cornhusker.

$4,500 LFSN

Inquiries to Bob Hutt 732-241-6606
or Joerg Hoffmann 732-766-4507

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Rich Strike joins Pennsylvania stallion roster

Rich, meet Rich. Pennsylvania's Mountain Springs Farm was going to be busy enough with a slew of new stallions this season, but owner Rich Miller's Palmyra operation took on another assignment with the January arrival of 2022 Kentucky Derby-G1 winner Rich Strike.

"It's a little different," Miller said of having a Derby winner around. The son of Keen Ice showed off at stallion show Jan. 11. "He's the first one everybody wanted to see."

Owned by RED TR-Racing, Rich Strike upset the Derby at 81-1 six starts after getting claimed out of his maiden win for $30,000 by RED-TR and trainer Eric Reed. The 3-year-old campaign concluded with a sixth in the Belmont Stakes-G1, a fourth in the Travers-G1, a second by a head to Hot Rod Charlie in the Lukas Classic-G2, a fourth behind Horse of the Year Flightline in the Breeders' Cup Classic-G1 and a sixth in the Clark-G1. Rich Strike started just once in 2023 and breezed four times at Saratoga this summer while attempting a comeback with trainer Bill Mott.

Nearly three years removed from his signature win, Rich Strike begins a stallion career in a regional program after potential destinations in the United States and abroad did not come to fruition. A partnership bought Rich Strike from owner Rick Dawson (who retained several breeding rights) and will stand the horse for $6,500 live foal. The first Derby winner to retire to stud in Pennsylvania joins Alejandro, Beverly Park, Eastwood, Enticed, Tight Ten, Uncle Benny, Uptowncharlybrown and Well Spelled at Mountain Springs. The chestnut fit right in, according to Miller.

"He's straight, correct, everything about him is nice and well made," said Miller. "It's been almost three years now so you're not capitalizing on it being right after the Derby. At first I wasn't too receptive because I already had these stallions lined up, but we've had a good response to him. We're going to be pretty busy."

Bred in Kentucky by Calumet Farm, Rich Strike won two of 14 starts and earned $2,526,809. In addition to the Derby, he started in seven graded stakes and placed in two.

Mare recruitment and the business side of the arrangement will fall on bloodstock agent Kevin Bitler, while Miller handles the day-to-day care and breeding. Known for one big win, Rich Strike brings more to the equation. Dam Gold Strike, a daughter of Smart Strike, was Canada's champion 3-year-old filly of 2005 thanks to four wins (all stakes) topped by Woodbine's Selene-G3. Her other foals include Grade 2 winner Llanarmon and winners Lode Lady and My Blonde Mary. Lode Lady is the dam of Pennsylvania-bred Grade 3 winner, millionaire and recent $1 million broodmare purchase Neecie Marie.

EMMA STEINKAMP

"He's too good-looking of a horse, he did enough and he deserves a chance at stud," said Kentucky-based agent Jamie Lamonica, who organized the stallion deal. "We landed on Pennsylvania because he fits a lot of mares there and he's a horse people can get excited about. The stallion awards, breeders' awards and the number of race dates are very important and Pennsylvania has a good mix."

Bitler hopes to attract 100 mares, and will count on the region's mare variety to help get there.

"Pennsylvania is a good spot because you have a variety of breeders," he said. "Mares can come from Maryland, Pennsylvania obviously, all over the region. The main goal is to get horses to foal out in Pennsylvania, but you've got the Delaware-certified, Virginia-certified programs too."

– Joe Clancy

Better Your Odds with a Pin Oak Lane Grade 1 Stallion

CLOUD COMPUTING

GRADE 1 PREAKNESS WINNER OF $1.1 MILLION

2024 Leading PA sire by progeny earnings & number of winners

Top son of Maclean's Music

Leading 2024 third-crop sire in Mid-Atlantic **by earnings** ($4,151,992) and **winners** (80). SEVEN black-type winners in 3 crops to run, 18 black-type earners total, including champion **MY WITCH ASQUIFAR**.

Maclean's Music–Quick Temper, by A.P. Indy

$3,500 LFSN; $3,000 for 2 mares; $2,500 for 3 or more mares. Registered Pennsylvania stallion

LORD SHANAKILL

GRADE 1 WINNER OF $908,475

By sires of sires SPEIGHTSTOWN

Sire of 17 stakes horses, including G1 winner **MY DREAM BOAT** ($1,002,496). A precocious sprint turf specialist racing in England and France, winning from 6 fur. to 1 mile with graded wins at 2, 3 and 4.

Speightstown–Green Room, by Theatrical (Ire)

$2,500 LFSN; $2,000 for 2 mares; $1,500 for 3 or more mares. Registered Pennsylvania stallion

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Regional runner Spikezone named claimer of the year

EQUI-PHOTO INC

The National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association named regional runner Spikezone its 2024 Claiming Horse of the Year. His 11 wins on the year trailed only Tennessee Moon's 13 victories in North America. The HBPA presents the award to spotlight horses who are exceptional at their levels, with claiming horses comprising the largest segment of racing across America.

Spikezone and his connections will be honored Feb. 25 at the National HBPA awards luncheon at the organization's annual conference in Safety Harbor, Fla.

"We're thrilled for him," said Mid-Atlantic-based trainer Jamie Ness, whose Jagger Inc. stable owns the 6-year-old with Troy Johnson and Charles Lo. "He deserves it."

Said Lo: "I am so shocked. It just doesn't happen the way it has – maybe one time out of 100. It's crazy. I never had a horse that good."

Johnson: "It's a dream, unreal."

Spikezone concluded 2024 with six consecutive victories capped by Parx Racing's $75,000 Let's Give Thanks Stakes Nov. 27. The Florida-bred gelding became eligible for the award by competing for a $100,000 claiming price March 23 at Tampa Bay Downs.

"Spikezone is a terrific example of how horses can just get better with age, patience and horsemanship," said Todd Mostoller, chair of the National HBPA's awards committee. "At 11-for-14, Spikezone also shows that horses can come back from multiple surgeries and still be excellent and admirable racehorses at their level."

Johnson and Lo said they raced claimers around Northern California's Bay area, where they live. In a move designed to increase their success, Johnson cold-called Ness about being their trainer. Spikezone was one of their first purchases, Lo said.

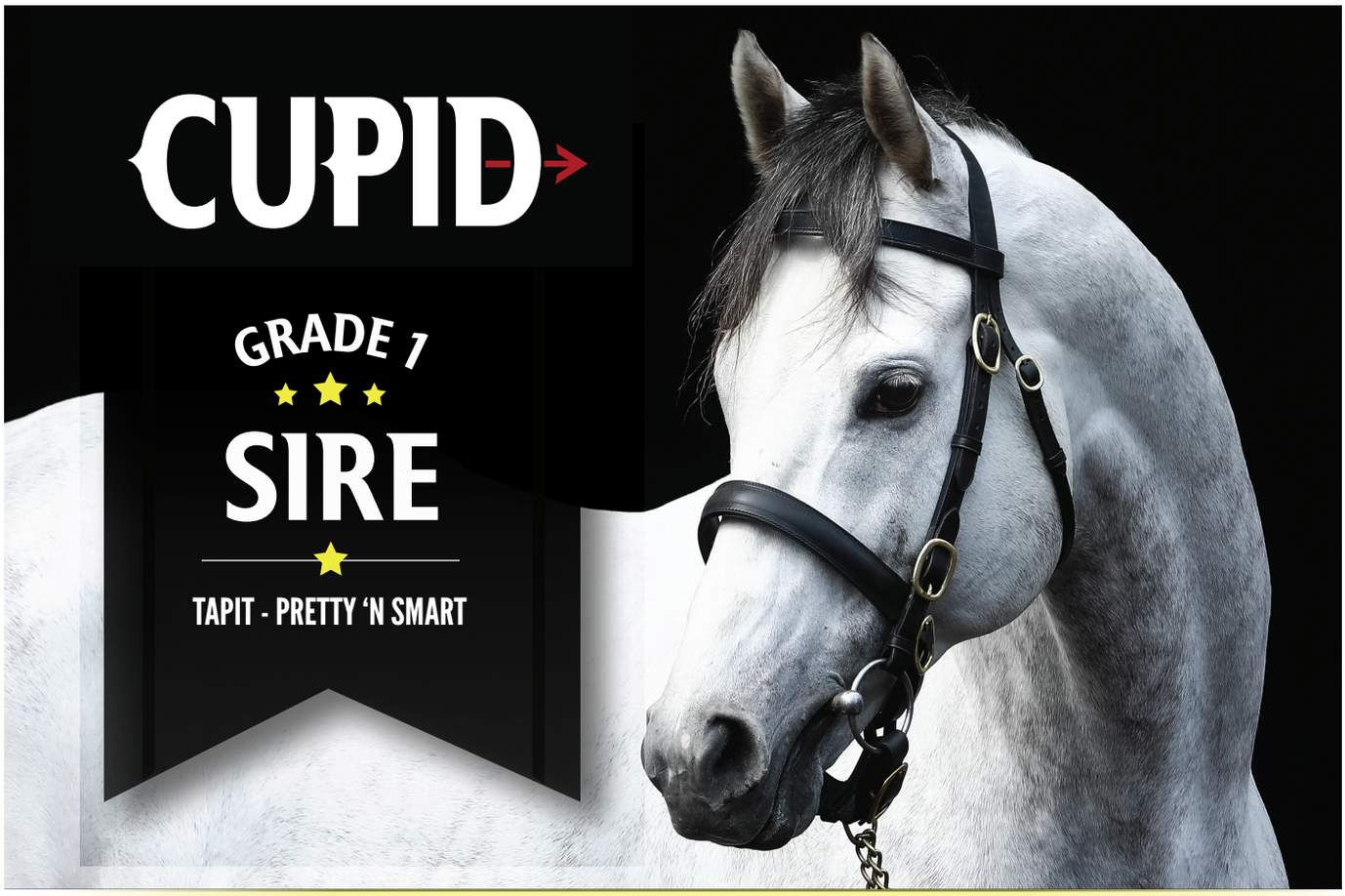
A son of the late stallion Speightster, Spikezone sold twice as a yearling at OBS auctions in Ocala, Fla., for $2,500 and later to Ness for $19,000.

"He's the ultimate warrior horse," Ness said. "When he was a 2-year-old, he was outworking older horses. He was really good. Then right before I debuted him, I came to the barn and he had some heat [in a knee]. He had a small chip, so I took it out . . . We have to always be cognizant of it, so we don't train hard. We kind of have his number. We keep him happy."

When Spikezone made it to the races in June of his 3-year-old season, Ness correctly gambled that no one would take him out of the $25,000 maiden-claiming race, which made him eligible for certain starter-allowance races. Spikezone won three of his first seven starts before being claimed for $50,000 that November. Ness, Johnson and Lo claimed back in his next race for $40,000, with one of his four original owners bowing out.

"Jamie said, 'I think we should claim him back. We've just got to manage him and manage his races,' " Johnson said. "I said, 'All right, let's do it.' It was the best thing we ever did. Now he's made over $400,000. And he's only getting better."

The success only came after another major setback. Spikezone raced once after being reunited with his original barn, then was off 10 months for arthroscopic surgery on both knees. Finishing second Dec. 16, 2023, in his second start back, Spikezone embarked on a near-flawless 2024, earning $378,082 of his $481,422 career bankroll. Victories came at Tampa Bay, Parx Racing, Delaware Park and Laurel Park. ■



GRADE 1 WINNING MILLIONARE

No other Mid-Atlantic Sire for 2024 has more than Cupid's 2 Grades SWrs or a Grade 1 SWr

Sire of 3-year-old of 2024, **CARSON'S RUN** ($1,574,629) **GRADE 1** SW at 2, Summer S. at Woodbine, **GRADE 1** SW at 3, Saratoga Derby Invitational S., **GRADE 3** SW Jockey Club Derby Invitational S,; **GRADE 2** Santa Anita Oaks winner **DESERT DAWN** won the **GRADE 3** La Canada S. at 4, 2024, 3rd **GRADE 2** Zenyatta S. and **GRADE 2** Santa Maria S,; Prince of Wales SW **DUKE OF LOVE** won the **GRADE 3** West Virgina Governor's S. in 1:42:39; Multiple Stakes Winner **GOD OF LOVE (CAN)** won $217,548 at 2, incl. **GRADE 3** Grey S.; etc.

Top Five Active Fourth Crop Sire of Cumalative Graded Stakes Winners

Multiple Graded SWr of $1,71,873, **CUPID** won the **GRADE 2** Rebel S. in a faster time than **American Paharoah, Curlin, Will Take Charge**, etc.

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When Barns Start Blossoming

By Linda Poulos

"They've all gone to bed now, it's all right,"
the old mare nickers in the night.

She sighs and quite weary nibbles some hay.
This was she thinks the longest day.

People all worried, anxious faces; they keep
waiting, the mare just paces.

Their calendars have all been duly marked, but
the spirit of birth has not embarked.

The old mare watches the house lights dim.
The world is silent, time to begin.

The barn is hushed as a church in prayer, with
a golden aura of hay-scent air.

The old mare knows, and on her side she's
caught in a grip of a mighty tide.

And now burst free to struggle to stand
trembling, wet, awkward, grand.

A gangling, grappling, gorgeous foal. Baritone with a fuzzy poll.

A din of voices and the lanterns glare. Swinging
shadows, "Look it's here."

A joyous circle, sleepy-eyed, applauds the foal at the old mare's side.

"A filly? A colt?" "Well, you'd better check." "Look
at those hocks." "Get a load of that neck."

She noses her baby, a bit chagrined. Hears a
laughing voice, "OK, you win."

The folks file out with a kin-felt awe, peace
descends on the darkened stall.

It's once again the time of birth when barns start
blossoming with foals on earth.

Linda Poulos, retired racing official and lifelong horsewoman, lives in Ocala, Fla. Her father Ernie, who trained 1991 Horse of the Year Black Tie Affair (Ire), used to tell her, "Could you pony another horse for me, and stop writing poems?" She only sort of listened.

Mid-Atlantic-bred Stakes Winners

December 16 – January 10

Maryland-bred

CELTIC CONTENDER, ch.c., 2021, Irish War Cry—Celtic Katie, by Posse. B-Fred Lewis; O-Lewis Family Racing Stable; T-Hamilton Smith. $75,000 Howard & Sondra Bender Memorial S, Laurel, Dec. 21.

SPENCERIAN, dk.b./br.m., 2020, Irish War Cry—Cursive, by Straight Talking. B-Franklin Smith Sr.; O-Larry Rabold; T-Hugh McMahon. $75,000 Politely S, Laurel, Dec. 21.

Pennsylvania-bred

CAPRICE, dk.b./br.f., 2022, Golden Lad—Grand Folly, by Street Cry (Ire). B-Gregory & Caroline Bentley; O-Runnymoore Racing; T-Cathal Lynch. $100,000 Gin Talking S, Laurel, Dec. 28.

FENTON FOREVER, ch.c., 2022, Pat On the Back—Fairy Gray, by Cat Thief. B-Desmond Wynter; O-Wynter Racing Stable; T-Tyler Servis. $100,000 Wait For It S, Parx, Dec. 30.

HONORABLE WIN, gr./ro.f., 2022, Winchill—Honorable Partner, by Congressional-honor. B/O-Pewter Stable; T-Kate Demasi. $100,000 Miss Behaviour S, Parx, Dec. 30.

MAXIMUS MERIDIUS, b.g., 2021, Maximus Mischief—Quiet Virtue, by Quiet American. B-Westerly Farm; O-LC Racing, Cash is King & Robert Reid Jr.; T-Robert Reid Jr. $150,000 Gravesend S, Aqueduct, Dec. 28.

SIMPLY JOKING, b.f., 2022, Practical Joke—Imply, by E Dubai. B-Barlar; O-Grantley Acres, Ryan Conner and Berkels0813; T-D. Whitworth Beckman. $100,000 Letellier Memorial S, Fair Grounds, Dec. 21.

Virginia-bred

GIGANTE, b.h., 2020, Not This Time—Summertime Green, by Empire Maker. B-Ann Mudge Backer and Smitten Farm; O-Iapetus Racing & Diamond T Racing; T-Steve Asmussen. $100,000 Buddy Diliberto Memorial S, Fair Grounds, Dec. 21.

Equistar Millionaires' Club

Top runners sire top runners

Brody's Cause

Giant's Causeway–Sweet Breanna (Sahm)

Two-time G1-winning millionaire

Sire of Grade 1 winner **KALYPSO** ($607,638), who won or placed in SIX graded stakes and sold as a broodmare prospect for $2.1 million in 2022. Also sire of G3 winner **SITTIN ON GO** ($365,736), **PALUXY** ($273,670) and 16 additional stakes horses. $3,500 LFSN

Smarty Jones

Elusive Quality–I'll Get Along (Smile)

3YO Champion and multiple G1 classic winner of $7.6 million

Sire of 32 black-type winners, including 3 champions, 25 graded stakes horses, among them G1 winners **BETTER LIFE, SMART D N A, BAMBA Y BAMBA, CENTRALINTELIGENCE**. $3,500 LFSN

Zozos NEW FOR 2025

Munnings–Papa's Forest (Forestry)

Graded stakes-winning millionaire with THREE 100+ Beyers

First-time-out winner with 7 victories in 15 starts. **ZOZOS** won by a total of 20¼ lengths, from 6 fur. to 1 1/16 mi., with THREE 100+ Beyers to his credit. Won G3 Ack Ack S, Hanshin S, Knicks Go Overnight S; second in G2 Louisiana Derby; third G1 Churchill Downs S. $2,500 LFSN

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Milestones

Hired:

As executive director of the Maryland Racing Commission, **Chris Merz**, after the retirement of Mike Hopkins at the end of 2024. Merz has more than a decade of experience as a leader in horse racing operations, compliance, business strategy and oversight. He worked as the senior director of racing operations at Canterbury Park in Minnesota, director of racing and racing secretary at Santa Anita Park in California, and racing secretary at the Maryland Jockey Club tracks Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course. Most recently, he was a consultant focused on compliance with the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority and other jurisdictional compliance. Merz holds a bachelor's degree in animal science from the University of Arizona. His ongoing service in horse racing includes HISA's Emergency Medical Response Training and Certification Committee and the Racing Operations Committee. He previously served on the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association's American Graded Stakes Committee. Chaired by George Mahoney, the commission regulates and issues licenses governing horse racing meets in Maryland. Hopkins worked in the Maryland racing industry for 40 years.

Won:

118 races at Laurel Park and Pimlico Race Course in 2024, trainer **Brittany Russell**, to top the Maryland Jockey Club's leaderboard by five wins over Jamie Ness. It was Russell's consecutive crown after ending Claudio Gonazlez's six-year reign. Russell overtook Ness with a strong fall meet at Laurel, where she won 54 races from 149 starts on the way to the meet title. She won four at the track Sept. 29. Nationwide, she registered 157 wins, 104 seconds and 89 thirds from 655 starts for earnings of $7,672,690. Russell ranked eighth in the country in wins and 19th in money won. Married to jockey Sheldon Russell, Brittany is often joined in the winner's circle by their daughter, Edy, and son, Rye. The 35-year-old conditioned 2024 stakes winners Saddle Up Jessie, Apple Picker, Regalo, Bosserati, Winterfell, Tony Eclipse, Sea Dancer and One Man Team along with stable star Post Time. He won Laurel's General George Stakes-G3, Aqueduct's Carter-G2, and Laurel's Polynesian while also placing in three Grade 1 stakes. Russell won with her first starter, Oh My, at Laurel Feb. 25, 2018 after working for Brad Cox, Jimmy Jerkens, Ron Moquett and the late Hall of Famer Jonathan Sheppard. The MJC jockey crown went to **Jaime Rodriguez** with 177 wins, well clear of J.G. Torrealba and Jevian Toledo. Rodriguez, who also won the crown in 2023, won the Laurel Park winter meet 50-28 over Jeiron Barbosa, defeated Torrealba 45-34 in the summer standings, and outlasted Torrealba to take the fall title 52-46. Rodriguez also reigned during the Preakness meet at Pimlico with 12 victories. He also dominated at Delaware Park, winning the riding title for the fourth straight season. Among horses at the MJC tracks, Band Camp and No Easy Days each won six races at Laurel in 2024. Band Camp added a Timonium win to get to seven in the state.

Grabbed:

His first Penn National training championship, **Brandon Kulp,** whose 58 wins were enough to dethrone Tim Kreiser (54) after a year-long battle. Erin McClellan finished third with 50 wins at the Grantville, Pa. track. All three won more than 24-percent of their starts. Kreiser had won the pervious 10 titles at Penn National, including a 57-56 decision of Kulp in 2023. The 2024 race came down to the final stages too as Kulp won 11 races in December while Kreiser tallied seven. See the January edition

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UPDATED FEES FOR 2025

Stallion	Original Fee (S&N)	New Fee (S&N)
Authentic	$25,000	$15,000
Bolt d'Oro	$30,000	$15,000
Cyberknife	$20,000	$15,000
Jackie's Warrior	$35,000	$25,000
Mo Donegal	$10,000	$5,000
Vino Rosso	$12,500	$7,500

For breeders with existing contracts, those contracts have already been changed to reflect the prices above. You will be receiving a copy of the revised contracts within the next couple of days.

We remain steadfast in our mission to be "The Breeders' Farm", delivering the best value and opportunities in the breeding industry. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey. We look forward to working with you through another successful breeding season.

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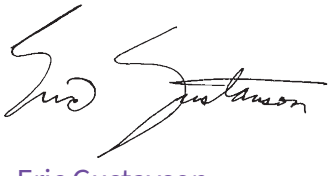

Eric Gustavson

Milestones

for more on Kulp and Kreiser. The owners' race stayed tight until the end too as Tom Coulter won 24 to edge Bush Racing Stable by a single victory. Both owners won races on closing night, Dec. 27. The track's jockey crown went to Angel Rodriguez, whose 112 wins were 12 more than Jomar Torres. Keeping It Country and Titled Tiara won five apiece to tie for the lead among horses.

Won:

47 races to capture the 2024 Charles Town owners' championship, **Nicole and Ronney Brown**, in a tight race with Richard Burnsworth who won 45 races at the West Virginia track. The Browns won eight races at the track with Little Bit of That to lead the way. In the trainers' race, Anthony Farrior put up 116 wins, nine more than Ronney Brown. Jeff Runco (84 wins) completed the top three, but won the earnings crown with $2,187,392. Arnaldo Bocachica ran away with the jockeys' crown, posting 181 wins and putting up a 31-percent victory rate. His closest pursuers, Marshall Mendez and Christian Hidalgo, had 80 wins. Gran Andrews won all nine of is starts at the track to lead all horses in wins. Overnight Pow Wow joined Little Bit of That with eight wins.

Dominated:

The Parx Racing trainers' standings, **Jamie Ness**, who put up 162 wins to outdistance Ernesto Padilla-Preciado (66) and Scott Lake (54) at the top

HOOFPRINTS INC.

of the standings. It was the fifth consecutive championship for Ness, second in the nation with 307 wins. Top Notch Racing led all owners with 50 wins at Parx, 17 more than the partnership of Morris Kernan, Yo Berbs and Ness' Jagger Inc. Another Ness-trained partnership (Kernan, Yo Berbs, Jagger Inc. and Madison Avenue Racing Stable) won 28 races. With 176 wins, Mychal Sanchez ran away with the jockeys' title over Eliseo Ruiz (113) and Dexter Haddock (90). Ambitiously Placed put up eight wins – five for trainer Michael Pino and Just In Time Racing – from 15 starts at the track to lead all horses.

Chosen:

As board chairman of The Race for Education, Maryland Thoroughbred owner and breeder **Kevin O'Keeffe** at the organization's December board meeting. The Baltimore-based attorney has been an RFE board member since 2012 and will be joined by Bill Casner as vice chairman and original board members Gay Bredin (another with Maryland roots), David Ingordo and new member Pete Aiello, one of RFE's first scholarship recipients and the current track announcer at Gulfstream Park. "It is an honor to serve as chair of The Race for Education, which has awarded over $7.5 million in scholarships and educational programs since its inception in 2000," said O'Keeffe. "Recipients have pursued careers across the racing industry, including roles as trainers, veterinarians, bloodstock agents and racetrack managers. Supporting students as they achieve their dreams while shaping the future of the horse racing industry is truly special. The board is committed to reinvigorating fundraising efforts and expanding scholarship opportunities for the next generation." In 2017, the RFE board and staff decided to wind down operations after years of significant success, citing a perceived decline in industry interest. Scholarships were subsequently managed by the KEEP Foundation, and the plan was to distribute remaining funds until depletion. However, the Kentucky-based organization has since been revitalized by unexpected generosity from donors. Notably, a bequest of $500,000 from the estate of Robert Reeves in 2024 provided significant support for future initiatives. At the same time, there has been a marked increase in high-quality scholarship applications from young people aspiring to careers in the equine industry. To meet this growing interest, RFE co-founder and former president Elisabeth Jensen will lead new fundraising efforts, while

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65% winners/starters • $67,874 AE/starter

Leading earner: **DOUBLE CROWN** ($947,020)

14 total black-type horses • $2,500 LFSN, BC & MM

HOLY BOSS

Street Boss–Holy Grace, by Holy Bull

$98,675 AE/winner

14 total black-type earners include 2024 SWs **BOSSERATI**, **SACRED THUNDER** (at 2) • $2,500 LFSN, BC & MM

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Milestones

communications coordinator Brittany Bell will oversee the scholarship application and award process. In 2025, RFE will award $85,000 in scholarships and grants, including two new opportunities: the Bob Reeves Memorial Scholarship, open to an Ohio student pursuing studies in equine, animal science, or agriculture, or whose families work in the equine industry, and the Dual-Credit Scholarship for high school students enrolled in dual-credit equine programs. Applications for the 2025-26 academic year will be available soon, with deadlines to be announced shortly. For more, see raceforeducation.org.

Created

A pilot project by the The Jockey Club to incentivize breeding. The **Mare Incentive Program** waives registration fees for certain 2026 foals of mares that meet defined criteria. The goal, said Jim Gagliano, president and COO of The Jockey Club, is "to stimulate interest in [a group of mares] that appear to have left production." Each December, The Jockey Club will provide a list of the mares in the Mare Incentive Program through interactive registration. The list for the 2025 breeding season is available, and The Jockey Club will waive the registration application fee for 2026 foals out of these mares. Mares are divided into two age groups. The first, for mares from 6 to 9 years old as of Jan. 1, 2025, includes: no race starts in the past two years (2023 and 2024); not reported as the dam of a foal in the past two years; not reported as covered by a stallion in the past two years; and not exported to a foreign country from the United States, Canada or Puerto Rico with the export as the last movement of record. The second are for mares ages 10 to 19 as of Jan. 1, 2025. They must meet the criteria above and have produced a registered foal in 2021 or 2022. "When including both sets of mares, approximately 23,000 mares have been identified that could be introduced or returned to the breeding population," said Jamie Haydon, The Jockey Club's deputy executive director. To learn more about the program and see the report, visit registry.jockeyclub.com.

Announced

A $7.8-million stakes schedule for Monmouth Park's 80th season, May 10 through Sept. 14. Led by the $1 million NYRA Bets Haskell-G1, the lineup lists 51 stakes, nine graded, and 11 restricted to New Jersey-breds. The July 19 Haskell card includes the $600,000 United Nations-G2, $500,000 Molly Pitcher-G3, $400,000 Monmouth Cup-G3, $300,000 WinStar Matchmaker-G3, and $100,000 Wolf Hill.

THE RACING BIZ
The Independent Voice for Mid-Atlantic Racing and Breeding

Racing trends to watch in 2025: Frank Vespe's thoughts on a few racing trends for 2025.

Maryland Racing Commission OKs new TMJC as track operator: In late December, the Maryland Racing Commission signed off on the new nonprofit Maryland Jockey Club to operate Laurel Park in the new year. Vespe reports.

Maryland horsemen, breeders point to '25 priorities: A board to govern the new Maryland Jockey Club, a new training center, and new breeder incentives are top priorities for Maryland's horsemen and breeders, reports Vespe.

Looking at "bettable" numbers: Which jockeys and trainers at Charles Town were most bettable in 2024? The Racing Biz crunched the numbers. Names included riders Grant Whitacre and Megan Reap and trainer Stephen Murdock.

Eight stories that mattered in Maryland in 2024: It was a tumultuous, consequential year for the Maryland Thoroughbred industry. Vespe provides eight stories that mattered.

A year in photos: Photographer Allison Janezic turned up in lots of places around the Mid-Atlantic in 2024. From the Preakness to the Charles Town Classic, from the Cotillion to the Haskell, she made the rounds.

Eight stories that mattered at Charles Town in 2024: From A to Z (well, actually more like W), Ted Black offers eight stories that grabbed his attention in 2024 at the West Virginia track.

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FEBRUARY 2025

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THE GENERAL GEORGE STAKES - LISTED
Four Year Olds and Upward // Seven Furlongs

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Fillies and Mares - Four Year Olds and Upward // Seven Furlongs

$100,000 GUARANTEED
THE NELLIE MORSE STAKES
Fillies and Mares - Four Year Olds and Upward // One Mile and One Sixteenth

$100,000 GUARANTEED
THE JOHN B. CAMPBELL STAKES
Four Year Olds and Upward // One Mile and One Eighth

SAT/FEB 22 $200,000 IN PURSES

$100,000 GUARANTEED
THE MIRACLE WOOD STAKES
Three Year Olds // One Mile

$100,000 GUARANTEED
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Fillies - Three Year Olds // Seven Furlongs

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Freshman sire Pat On the Back shines in 2024

Four runners. Two stakes performers. In his first crop of 13 named foals, Pat On the Back made quite an impression to become the Mid-Atlantic's leading freshman sire of 2024.

Standing at Bonner Hill Farms in Littlestown, Pa., family-owned and run by Cristina Holmes, the chestnut is garnering more attention heading into his fifth breeding season. Holmes has been there for the entire ride.

"He's my heart horse," she said of the 11-year-old son of Congrats, who arrived at Godstone Farm in 2020. Then working for Pennsylvania horsewoman Judy Barrett, Holmes took over the management of the farm the next year when her family bought the property. The farm name changed, but the stallion never moved.

Holmes, 42, was enthralled with horses as a youngster, riding and caring for them at the barn where she rode when she was 10. She set horses aside until she gave up a job as a bookkeeper and started working at Godstone in 2016.

"I decided I hated being in the office," she said. "That's how I got into the racing industry . . . and that's when I started loving it."

Godstone stood Well Spelled, who arrived not long before Holmes. She went into business on her own in August 2021 and started leasing Pat On the Back in 2022.

Holmes has a connection with Desmond Wynter's Fenton Forever, Pat On the Back's first stakes winner who dominated Parx Racing's Wait For It Stakes Dec. 30 to remain undefeated in two starts. "I foaled him and raised him," said Holmes. "He was born when it was Godstone."

EQUI-PHOTO INC

Fenton Forever wins the Wait For It Stakes for sire Pat On the Back.

His dam, the Cat Thief mare Fairy Gray, makes it interesting. "Every year, she will not have a baby in the stall," said Holmes, who relayed the strategy come foaling time. "We turn her out in the morning, she runs outside, lays down and starts having her baby. Desmond thinks it's funny. So we know when she's close we have to turn her out and watch her."

Of the eight runners in the Wait For It for Pennsylvania-bred and -sired juveniles, three were sons of Pat On the Back. Quint Essential Stables' Reelin N Dealin finished second in the 7-furlong test over a sloppy track. Still a maiden, he has seconds in three of four starts, including his debut in the Whistle Pig Stakes in September and a maiden special weight in November behind Fenton Forever. Good Friday Man ran fifth. Combined, the three earned $78,960 of the $100,000 purse.

Fenton Forever is the richest of Pat On the Back's four 2-year-olds to race in 2024, accounting for $80,400 of the stallion's $140,976 in progeny earnings.

Pat On the Back won eight stakes, nine of his 30 starts, with four seconds and six thirds (all stakes), and earned $1,144,545. Victories included Belmont Park's 1-mile Kelso Handicap-G2 in 1:33.97, as well as the Affirmed Success and Commentator stakes, the latter in 1:33.43 for the mile.

"Pat stamps his stock from what I can see," said Holmes. "He throws nice solid bone, a nice shoulder. Pat's got a fantastic shoulder and very powerful rear end. Fenton is built very much like that."

Pat On the Back covered 20 mares in 2024. Holmes hopes for 25 this year.

"He was like an underdog when he came in. But now there is definitely interest."

– Cindy Deubler

Corrections

Corrections to stallion pages in the December edition:

- The stud fee for My Prankster is $2,500 live foal.
- The phone number on the Pat On the Back page for Bonner Hills Farms is (443) 854-4404.
- In the female family of Capo Kane, Kingmambo's sire and dam are Mr. Prospector and Miesque.
- The phone number on the Enticed page for Ralph Santella is (917) 232-4552.

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— Next Chapters —

BY MAGGIE KIMMITT

English Minister

A stakes winner of $551,246, English Minister enjoys his new life with Ryan and Annie Sirolli in Minnesota.

As a 9-year-old in 2019, English Minister crafted a four-race winning streak culminating in the Find Stakes at Laurel Park. Five years later under Western tack with glitter in his mane, he and 12-year-old Annie Sirolli competed at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds as part of the victorious Carver County 4-H Compulsory Drill Team.

All thanks to Becky Davis.

"I had him right off the track for a couple years and fell in love with him," Davis said. "But I thought he might suit my niece. I also nicknamed him Benny, and that is what they call him. It would throw her for a loop if you asked her about English Minister."

Davis' sister, Margaret Sirolli – both are daughters of renowned Maryland veterinarian and breeder Dr. Tom Bowman and his wife Chris – joked that she prefers not to tell people the horse is a stakes winner of eight races and $551,246.

"Honestly I purposely don't say his official name because I don't really want people looking him up and finding out he was a decent racehorse," she said. "I like the allure of not really

knowing what his background is out here. Truly, I don't even know if our girls know his full background."

For starters, English Minister is a transplanted Maryland boy. Bred by Robert Meyerhoff's Fitzhugh program, the son of English Channel and the Deputy Minister mare Groovy Minister began his career for trainer Dickie Small as a 2-year-old Aug. 12, 2012, and finished seventh of nine going a mile on the dirt at Monmouth Park. Two starts later, he won on the turf at Laurel. As a 3-year-old, the chestnut lost all nine starts but tried stakes company three times including a fourth in the James W. Murphy on the day Oxbow won the Preakness Stakes-G1 at Pimlico.

Small died of cancer April 4, 2014, and six days later English Minister made his only start of the year – for Small's assistant Dylan Smith. "A lot of the horses went back to farms to just chill out and have owners figure out what to do," Davis said.

English Minister eventually went to trainer Mike Trombetta, but spent more than a year away from the races. He made nine starts in 2015, and halted a 15-race losing streak with back-to-back allowance triumphs at Saratoga. He lost his next 17 starts, but finished second four times including in the 2016 Find and 2017 Mister Diz Stakes (missing in both by a neck). As a 7-year-old in October 2017, he won a tough optional claimer at 6 furlongs on the turf at Belmont Park but lost all nine tries in 2018 (although he was less than a length back in third in the Ben's Cat Stakes). His 9-year-old campaign made up for lost time as he put together those four wins – two at Presque Isle Downs and two at Laurel, capped by the Find in September.

Meyerhoff wound down decades of racing/breeding success for good in 2020, and at 10 English Minister was an ideal candidate for a new role. Meyerhoff reached out to Tom Bowman, a long-time friend and advisor, who assisted in the dispersal of the Fitzhugh horses. Younger horses were sold in training, some fillies as broodmare prospects. But when Trombetta told Bowman that English Minister was "so cool and gentle he would put his own kids on him," a light went on.

"My dad called to see if I wanted to take him and see how he suited my daughter Allison as a possible future pony-club mount," Davis said. "The next day I took a two-horse trailer to Fair Hill and decided if he loaded up easily onto a small trailer he was unfamiliar with, then he was meant to go home with me."

Davis arrived to no barn help and a note letting her know which stall English Minister was in. He walked right into the trailer and stood loose while Davis saw to the tail bar and ramp before driving home. On the farm, Davis and her daughter rode English Minister casually with no specific goal.

> "The girls were in costume and the theme was trolls, so Annie was in this funny little outfit and he had glitter all over him."
>
> *– Margaret Sirolli, on English Minister's new job*

"He was so easy and mild-mannered, no off-track training was focused on him, and I learned how important that is when I attempted to take him to the hunt field," Davis said. "Benny gently let me know that what I was doing wasn't going to work, so we walked back home, had a carrot and a pat, and decided we both needed more experienced partners."

Horse and rider bonded nonetheless, and Davis was happy to have the gelding as a babysitter and enjoying carrots and sweet potatoes. No harm, no foul, and the promise to Meyerhoff was fulfilled.

In 2015 Sirolli, husband Ryan and daughters Lucy and Annie relocated to Mayer, Minn., about an hour west of the Twin Cities.

"It's a very rural area; we live on a dirt road. My husband works for Cargill, so we've moved around a bunch for both our careers," Sirolli said. "A large part of it, especially where we are, is Western riding."

The Sirollis met at Virginia Tech when Margaret was in veterinary school and Ryan in graduate school. A native of the York, Pa., area, Ryan learned to ride with friends and eventually got into foxhunting. They bought a 10-acre farm in Mayer. Ryan enjoyed riding with their daughters, who quickly became involved in the local 4-H. Through friends in Pennsylvania, they found a mount for Ryan, a Paint/Quarter Horse for older daughter Lucy, and a Haflinger pony for Annie.

The shoes came off that plan when Ryan's mare turned out to be "a fruit loop," and the Haflinger pony couldn't endure the cold weather. The family went to extreme measures to help the pony get through the winter, but drove her back to Pennsylvania in the spring.

Back to square one, the family again needed two horses.

English Minister waits his turn to show off with the Carver County 4-H drill team.

"Becky said Benny was not getting ridden much and needed a job," Margaret said. "And that was my dad's thinking too, that Benny would be a really good fit for Ryan."

During summer 2023, Margaret, Ryan and their daughters traveled home to Maryland.

"My nieces wanted to know if I had anything they could hop on," Davis said. "Allison gave a little instruction since her cousins were more used to Western riding, and Benny was a perfect gentleman. In the meantime, my brother-in-law was eyeing him up and talking about what a good size he was. A few months later Ryan and I came up with a plan to send him to a local trainer to have him started out on trails. If Benny handled it OK, we would send him to Minnesota."

English Minister spent a month with Justin Lee in Smyrna, Del., in Western tack, hacking through local parks, crossing streams and otherwise learning about his potential new job.

In October 2023, Davis shipped English Minister to Kentucky. Ryan and Annie made the 13-hour drive to pick him up and headed back to Minnesota with what was supposed to be Ryan's horse. They figured they'd find one for Annie by spring 2024.

"We never found anything," Margaret said. "It got to be the beginning of the summer. The girls had competed the year before in the 4-H drill team, which is kind of like synchronized swimming on horseback. They had a chance to go to a 4-H horse boot camp in June and we still didn't have a horse for Annie. She took a couple lessons on Benny and then took him to the boot camp."

Over three days, they worked with instructors on barrels, pole weaving, keyhole, showmanship, equitation and drill team.

At 16.3, English Minister towered over the competition but was indeed made for Annie, tall for her age at 5-foot-8. Margaret enjoys the reactions of other riders, and one day overheard a teenage girl ask her friend, "Is that a giraffe?"

No, just an ex-racehorse.

Annie and her new mount spent the summer of 2024 at various shows and 4-H events. English Minister met each new challenge like a professional, proving especially useful and suited to drill team. When Carver County 4-H qualified for the Minnesota State Show, he and Annie made the compulsory team.

"The girls were in costume and the theme was trolls, so Annie was in this funny little outfit and he had glitter all over him," Margaret said. "The team came in first place."

If English Minister misses his racing days back east, the 15-year-old doesn't let on, though he made the most of a chance to show off during a family camping trip last fall.

"One of the state parks around here has a really nice long stretch of grass rolling along a road," said Ryan. "He was in the best shape he's been in since he's been here. I wanted to see what he would do so I let him stretch out. I've ridden some fast horses in my life, but I've never experienced anything like that before. My kids are pretty competitive to put it mildly, but they couldn't keep up. They just couldn't – it was awesome." ■

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— From the editor —

BY JOE CLANCY

The making of an Eclipse-worthy photo

Post Time, the two-page photo spread near the front of the magazine, strives to grab readers, make them stop and look, hopefully linger and get comfortable with reading the magazine.

Something like that anyway.

Last September, we were trying to finish the October edition and didn't have a Post Time choice. Not a logical one anyway. Barrie Reightler sent me an email about skipping the photo to make room for an advertisement and maintain whatever page count we were trying to hit. I replied that there are no cardinal sins in magazine production. Well, there are but skipping Post Time isn't one. I made a couple of suggestions – something historic of Mountain Dew and Janon Fisher III (who'd died at age 90) or maybe something from the Charles Town Classic race.

Reightler ran with it from there, finding Scott Serio's remote on his Eclipse Sportswire photo website, making the choice and creating a Post Time for the ages. As Reightler called it then, the image of Skippylongstocking and jockey Jose Ortiz is "extraordinary" and won the Eclipse Award as Thoroughbred racing's top photograph of 2024.

The story behind it might be even better. Serio went to the emergency room to get that shot.

To set up a remote camera near the finish line early in the evening, he stepped through a gap in the inside rail and dislodged a protective foam pad which – unbeknownst to Serio or anyone else – housed a nest of bees. The bees swarmed, assistant Tim Sudduth yelled, Serio ran, tripped and fell to the track in a tangled mess of cameras, lenses, mini-tripods and other photo equipment plus bees. Stung five times, Serio landed on his shoulder, chest, ribs and a camera or two.

"I wrecked," is how he put it. "The cameras went tumbling, the bees stung me, I couldn't breathe, my ribs hurt, my shoulder hurt, everything was all over the place."

A few years ago, Serio had surgery to remove a portion of a lung due to a cancerous lesion. A bruised or broken rib could easily complicate matters.

"I fell hard and just said that I should get it checked out," he said. "They put me in a Gator, we met an ambulance for a ride to Jefferson Medical Center. They did X-rays and it didn't look like I'd broken anything, but they said I was going to be in some pain."

He got a shot in his left arm for the pain and caught an Uber back to the racetrack, where Sudduth and Sam Dixon were handling the photography details. In his truck in the parking lot, Serio pondered his next move. Two photographers could handle the job; three would make it easier.

How about two and a half?

"I didn't want to drive all the way down there and then have this happen and not even try," said Serio, who concentrated on the remotes while Sudduth and Dixon handled the main cameras. With one arm, on painkillers, Serio re-aimed the cameras and fired the PocketWizard trigger that got the winning image – after moving the camera a few feet up the stretch to get away from the bees.

Plenty had to go right to produce the photo, but the track configuration and 11:09 p.m. start set the stage.

"I love Charles Town because that inside light is about half a stop brighter than the outside light and it creates this studio effect with lights inside and outside and it can get cinematic," said Serio, who can go full photo-geek in seconds. "The hot spot is not at the finish line, it's actually three to five feet past the finish line. If the horse runs in the right spot, you get a spotlight on him and that's where Skippy ran."

On the drive home, with Dixon at the wheel, Serio pulled up the remote and had a look.

"Ahh, this one's pretty good," he said.

Serio grew up "in the shadow of Memorial Stadium" in Baltimore, became a racing fan through his father Gus and can remember crawling around the clubhouse restaurant at Pimlico as a kid. Serio was a fan of Ruffian and went to Charles Town in 1982, so Gus (who died in 2019) could bet Conquistador Cielo in the Belmont Stakes. While in high school in 1986, Serio attended the first Maryland Million and took one-frame-at-a-time photos with a Pentax K1000. Two years later, his photo of Little Bold John made the *Maryland Horse* magazine.

In 1992, he got a photojournalism degree from the famed program at the University of Missouri, but couldn't find a job and became a Baltimore City police officer in 1993. Freelancing as a photographer all the while, he retired from the force in 2013 to focus on the Eclipse Sportswire photography business whose clients include major publications and the Breeders' Cup among others. In 2015, the Colora, Md., resident won an Eclipse for an image of American Pharoah. He said collecting a statue for work in this magazine brought new heft.

"I grew up reading the *Maryland Horse*," Serio said, pointing out Skip Ball, Cappy Jackson, Douglas Lees and other photographers as influences. "It is incredibly rewarding to earn this award for an image published in that original publication's current iteration."

If a little painful. Reightler had heard about the bee incident, some of it anyway, before she made the Post Time choice. I even tried to work it into the cutline, but eventually gave up because there wasn't enough space. "When he wins an Eclipse Award for it," I emailed Reightler, "we can write about it."

Mission accomplished. ■

Oh, What a Year

REGIONAL STARS SHINE THROUGH IN BANNER 2024

Nine horses bred in the Mid-Atlantic became millionaires in 2024. Six earned at least $500,000. Eleven won graded stakes. One nearly captured the Belmont Stakes-G1. Two won nine races each to tie for third place in North America.

And that's just the basics.

Regional-bred horses shined on any number of stages big and small in 2024, leaving plenty of debate when it came to discussing the year's best. Who put together *the* year?

Maryland-bred Post Time won four races, captured two graded stakes and placed in three Grade 1 stakes. New Jersey-bred Book'em Danno did something Post Time couldn't do – win a Grade 1. Pennsylvania-bred Neecie Marie won two Grade 3 stakes, placed in a Grade 1 and sold for $1 million at the end of the year. Though his wins came in a maiden race and an allowance, Maryland-bred Mindframe may have been the region's most interesting horse thanks to seconds in the Belmont and Haskell-G1 after looking like a winner in both. West Virginia-bred Coastal Mission took his act on the road, and didn't disappoint anyone. Virginia-bred gelding Determined Kingdom won four races, and joined a new barn for 2025 after going through the sales ring for six figures. The success even touched the back roads as South Carolina-bred Stop the Cap won five races and North Carolina-bred Volleyballprincess made people look with a 2-year-old maiden win and a stakes-placing.

Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred writers checked in with some of the big names from a big year.

Coastal Mission

It would have been easy, and very likely profitable, to stay home with Coastal Mission and try to win a second consecutive Sam Huff West Virginia Breeders Classic Stakes, but that ship pretty much sailed when Jeff Runco took his homebred to Aqueduct for the Cigar Mile-G2 at the end of 2023.

With nothing left to prove in West Virginia, Coastal Mission deserved a chance to see how he consistently stacked up against open company. After he compiled a record of 9-3-2-0 with $535,000 earned in 2024, you can expect more of the same in 2025.

Coastal Mission, a 6-year-old son of Great Notion out of the Crowd Pleaser mare Smart Crowd, was one of nine reserve invitees to the $3 million Grade 1 Pegasus World Cup at Gulfstream Park Jan. 25. That didn't materialize, but other early-season options include the Grade 3 Toboggan Stakes at Aqueduct Feb. 1 and the General George at Laurel Feb. 15.

"We just want to make sure everything makes sense," said trainer Jeff Runco, also the co-owner and co-breeder with his wife Susan via their Coleswood Farm. "We're trying to map it out. It worked out pretty good last year, so we'll try to pick some good spots for the horse."

Coastal Mission's 2024 campaign included seconds in the Grade 2 John A. Nerud at Aqueduct and Grade 3 Salvator Mile at Monmouth Park. He ran fourth as the co-second choice in the Grade 2 Charles Town Classic – his only "home" start – before winning the Parx Dirt Mile and the Grade 3 Forty Niner at Aqueduct, Runco's first graded stakes score with a homebred in a 40-year training career. A second consecutive try in the Cigar Mile yielded a fourth, one spot better than 2023.

"It was really special what happened last year," Runco said of 2024. "We got the win at Parx, and then we had a lot of discussion about where to go next, whether we go in the Breeders Classic, where he would have been a big favorite, or opt to skip that and go to the Forty Niner, which was a tougher race, but something that we wanted to keep doing. If you want to

JOE LABOZETTA / COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

West Virginia-bred Coastal Mission heads to victory in the Grade 3 Forty Niner at Aqueduct in October.

run against those horses, like in the Cigar Mile, and whatever we're going to do this year, you have to keep him with that company to keep the horse on top of his game."

– Paul Halloran

Determined Kingdom

Four wins, $285,988 earned, two wins at his favorite racetrack Colonial Downs, plus single tallies at Laurel Park and Keeneland made for a solid year for Virginia-bred Determined Kingdom in 2024.

Then he made more news.

Entered in the Keeneland November horses-of-racing-age sale by Determined Stud and Kingdom Bloodstock, the turf sprinter sold for $190,000 to Virginian Larry Johnson. Now 6, Determined Kingdom relocated from trainer Phil Schoenthal's care to the barn of Mike Trombetta at Fair Hill Training Center and points to a 2025 campaign that might look a lot like 2024.

"Just what I need, another turf sprinter," said Johnson, whose stable includes graded winner Future Is Now and others who seem to appreciate going short on the lawn; then he got serious. "He's such a cool racehorse and I watched him enough so to have a chance to buy him at what I thought was a fair price was a good opportunity. I'm optimistic about him."

Bred by Audley Farm, Determined Kingdom cost $47,000 as a yearling and put up 10 wins and $734,177 in earnings for Schoenthal and co-owner Matt Dorman. The bay son of Animal Kingdom has done his best work in Virginia, winning six of 10 lifetime starts at Colonial Downs including three scores in the Punch Line Stakes plus the Jamestown and Meadow Stable.

"He doesn't just need Colonial, but Colonial has two races that he has dominated and he got better this past year," Johnson said. "I thought he seemed like a horse that was worth the money just considering what's available in Virginia."

Additional success at Colonial Downs in 2025 could help Determined Kingdom make a little history, as his half-dozen wins are third on the track's all-time list. He trails only Enjoyable (eight wins), Fox's Flyjinsky (seven) and My Boy Kyle (seven).

– Joe Clancy

COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

A star at Colonial Downs, Virginia-bred Determined Kingdom moves to a new owner and tariner for 2025.

JETTA VAUGHNS/COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

Maryland-bred Future Is Now won graded stakes in New York and Kentucky in 2024. She aims for even bigger things this year.

Future Is Now

Larry Johnson's career as an owner and breeder goes back far enough to include most every level of experience – good, bad, success, failure, somewhere in between all of those – which will make a man temper his enthusiasm. Or at least not get ahead of himself.

Johnson's runners won 25 races and piled up $1,675,720 in 2024, and that doesn't count the exploits of Johnson-bred Mindframe, who won twice and finished second in the Grade 1 Belmont Stakes and Haskell.

"In some respects, it's rewarding; in others it feels like good luck," Johnson said in January. "You plan a breeding, and you get lucky and the mare conceives and you get lucky if she has a live foal and you get lucky if the foal doesn't run through a fence. When it all comes together on the racetrack, and they compete successfully on a high level it's a remarkably good feeling. If you don't savor the moment, you sure as hell miss something."

Johnson didn't miss anything in 2024 when it came to Future Is Now, who won five races, added a second and a third, and put up $513,155 in nine starts. Bred in Maryland, the daughter of Maryland stallion Great Notion began 2024 on New Year's Day and started once a month through August. She won an allowance at Gulfstream Park in February, the The Very One Stakes at Pimlico in May, the Intercontinental-G2 at Saratoga in June and the Smart and Fancy at Saratoga in August. She didn't start in September, but capped the year with an upset of the world-traveling Star of Mystery (GB) and 10 others in the Franklin-G2 at Keeneland in October.

Her owner/breeder credited Future Is Now's newfound ability to ration her speed as a key to the success. In a December 2023 loss, she pressed a :20.89 first quarter and faded to fifth. In that New Year's Day start, she was on the engine through a quarter in :21.36 and a half in :43.64 and again finished fifth. She was up front again – :21.69, :44.11 – in March's Captiva Island Stakes and got caught late.

"I remember thinking, 'She's obviously fast but you can't win all these races by going to the front,' " Johnson said. "The race at Pimlico was kind of an eye-opener. She got away a little slow and she showed a different dimension, and that's what she did thereafter."

Third through a half-mile in the The Very One on Preakness Day, Future Is Now charged home late to win going away. She used similar tactics in her season-closing wins at Saratoga and Keeneland. Johnson and trainer Mike Trombetta bypassed the Breeders' Cup, where Star of Mystery finished fourth against males in the Turf Sprint-G1, for reasons mainly practical. For starters, Johnson didn't nominate her to the program as a foal so would have needed to pay a supplemental fee. Plus, the race was three weeks after the Franklin and would have been a 10th start on the year and included heavily favored Cogburn.

COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Second in two Grade 1 stakes last year, Maryland-bred Mindframe eyes major stops in 2025.

Rested over the winter, Future Is Now might make that trip to Del Mar in 2025. The 5-year-old aims for a 2025 debut at Keeneland, then important stops at Saratoga and beyond.

"I'd pretty much run her against any turf sprinter in the country after that year, and I told Mike I'd spend the $50,000 this year," said Johnson of the nomination fee. "I'm trying not to get ahead of myself. It's a long ways away and a long year. We'll do one step at a time – which everybody says, but nobody really means. The Breeders' Cup is not something I would dismiss."

– Joe Clancy

Mindframe

Todd Pletcher and his team liked what they saw from Mindframe at Florida's Palm Beach Downs Training Center in early 2024. The Maryland-bred son of Constitution – a $600,000 purchase by bloodstock agent Jacob West for Repole Stable and St. Elias Stable at the 2022 Keeneland September yearling sale – did things as right as an unraced 3-year-old can.

Then he flipped another switch.

"The horse trained really, really well prior to his debut," Pletcher said. "Then he had a gate work here at Palm Beach Downs prior to his first start that was probably as impressive a gate work we've seen since we've been training at Palm Beach Downs. So, we were anticipating a good debut. But like I've said before, you never really expect one to win by 13 and whatever that he did."

Mindframe won by 13¾ lengths March 30 at Gulfstream Park, blasting 10 others and sending signs that he'd be a 3-year-old the rest of the country needed to deal with in 2024. Another win followed, this one by only 7½ lengths going 1⅛ miles on the Kentucky Derby-G1 undercard at Churchill Downs.

That victory would be Mindframe's last of 2024, but his reputation continued to grow with seconds to Dornoch – by a half-length in the Belmont Stakes-G1 at Saratoga Race Course and Haskell Stakes-G1 at Monmouth Park.

"When we took him to the allowance race at Churchill, we expected him to handle the two turns, but you never know until you do it. Churchill can be a funny surface and all that, but he did that really well," Pletcher said. "But you know what? What you don't expect from one is in their third start to run that well in the Belmont. Tough beat in there. Tough beat in the Haskell."

Mindframe came out of the Haskell with bone bruising, and Pletcher started thinking about 2025 for the colt bred by Larry Johnson out of the Street Sense mare Walk of Stars.

The dark bay colt returned to Pletcher's main winter string at Palm Beach Downs in December and resumed a regular breezing schedule two days after Christmas. Short-term targets include something in early March at Gulfstream, possibly the $10 million Dubai World Cup-G1 April 5 with the Whitney-G1 at Saratoga and Breeders' Cup Classic-G1 at Del Mar pegged as long-term goals. Facing off with stablemate and champion Fierceness could come in those latter two.

"We've kind of had Dubai on the radar, but we'll see how things go before we get to something like that," Pletcher said. "If we go to Dubai, we go there and then have a little bit of a break. But I think we can keep the two of them separated until we hit Whitney time. We hope we have a decision to make that we're going to run the two of them against each other or try and separate them somehow.

"We're hoping that the first major target for Fierceness is the Met Mile. That'll keep them separated for a little while. If we are fortunate enough to have them running well and ready for the Breeders' Cup Classic by the end of the year, let's let them have at it in there."

– Tom Law

Jaxon Traveler

Three days after the latest victory by Jaxon Traveler – in the $75,000 Ft. Bliss Stakes to push his earnings further into seven figures – Tom Bellhouse still couldn't help but chuckle about Sunland Park announcer Eric Alwan's call of the Jan. 17 race.

"It's been just a great ride. We're always looking to have horses like him and run in Maryland. The Maryland program for us has been good over the years."

– West Point Thoroughbreds' Tom Bellhouse, about sprint veteran Jaxon Traveler

"Did you hear that call?" asked Bellhouse, executive vice president of owner West Point Thoroughbreds. "When he goes, 'He made a liar out of me,' that was too good."

Alwan figured Jaxon Traveler was beaten in the stretch, and said so just as Redline appeared to inch clear. The 7-year-old Maryland-bred son of Munnings battled back to win by a neck, picking up his third consecutive victory. Trained by Steve Asmussen, Jaxon Traveler also picked up $46,500 and padded his bankroll to $1,124,298 through January.

"Doing what we do, he's been a dream horse," Bellhouse said of the $140,000 purchase out the 2022 OBS April sale. "He'd be a dream horse for anybody."

Bellhouse called Jaxon Traveler, bred by Lenny and Pat Pineau, an "old war horse" and the results back it up. Jaxon Traver sports 13 victories in 35 starts and he's also finished second eight times and third five times. In addition to his late 2024 and early 2025 victories at Remington Park (David M. Vance Stakes), Zia Park (Zia Park Sprint Stakes) and Sunland, Jaxon Traveler won the 2020 Maryland Juvenile Futurity at Laurel Park, 2021 Bachelor Stakes at Oaklawn Park, 2022 Maryland Sprint-G3 at Pimlico Race Course and the 2023 Zia Park Sprint. That's stakes wins at 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

"It's been just a great ride," Bellhouse said. "We're always looking to have horses like him and run in Maryland. The Maryland program for us has been good over the years."

– Tom Law

Morning Matcha

One of the nine new millionaires at year's end, Morning Matcha won two stakes in 2024 – the Unique Bella in April and the Mrs. Penny in August – for LC Racing, Cash is King and Gary Barber before going through the Fasig-Tipton November sales ring.

Barber bought her back for $300,000 and will send her to back to trainer Butch Reid for a 2025 campaign. Bred in Pennsylvania by Crane Thoroughbred Services, the daughter of Central Banker and the Iam the Iceman mare Home Ice cost $18,000 at Timonium as a yearling. Her 29 lifetime starts include eight wins and a second in the 2022 Cotillion-G1 but no graded stakes win.

Reid would like to fix that.

"That's missing from her resume," he said. "She's just been a stalwart, a pleasure to train, pleasure to have in the barn. We bought her for $18,000 and to go over $1 million is very good. You wouldn't have anticipated that."

– Joe Clancy

Neecie Marie

Sometimes, racing can look like an easy game. Sometimes, you can buy a yearling for $25,000, win six races and $1 million with her and then sell her for $1 million. Sometimes, horses turn out like Neecie Marie.

"It's hard to imagine one going on to do what she did, but she was always a big, strong filly and the people at the farm told us she trained like a different horse on the turf, and it just mushroomed from there," trainer Butch Reid said. "For a $25,000 purchase, she was pretty special. It turned out better than you could have imagined."

Bred in Pennsylvania by Jon Marshall, the daughter of Cross Traffic sold to Milam Racing Stable at Fasig-Tipton Midlantic's fall yearling sale in 2021.

After early work at Lynn Ashby's Middletown Training Center in Delaware, Neecie Marie won four times as a 3-year-old in 2023. She leaped into the big time in 2024 with wins in the Beaugay Stakes-G3 at Aqueduct and the Light and Wonder Ladies Marathon-G3 at Kentucky Downs. In between, she placed in the New York-G1 and Beverly D.-G2. Sent to Fasig-Tipton November, she brought $1 million and joined the broodmare band at Japan's Lake Villa Farm. Farm representative Yoshihisa Iwasaki said via email that Neecie Marie would be sent to "one of Japan's top sires."

Reid was sorry to see her go, but saw an opportunity for the horse and her people.

RENEE TORBIT

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

CHRISTINE HAYDEN

Clockwise from upper left: Maryland-bred Jaxon Traveler, and Pennsylvania-breds Morning Matcha, Neecie Marie and Smooth B became millionaires in 2024. At age 9, Smooth B was the oldest to reach the milestone.

"She gave us a lot of thrills for the year, she went to a great home, and they're going to breed her and treat her like a queen," Reid said. "That was the minimum we were taking for her. If they didn't come up with that kind of money, we would have been very happy to bring her back for another year."

– Joe Clancy

Smooth B

Halter and shank in hand, Butch Reid found a spot in the Pimlico grandstand to watch Smooth B run in the Jim McKay Turf Sprint on Preakness Day.

The 9-year-old Pennsylvania-bred followed the leaders through a half-mile, challenged for the lead in the stretch and

just weakened late to finish third while looking for his first win since November 2022.

Low, leaning, snapping, shouting and blasting positive vibes at an outdated television above the mutuel windows, Reid looked like a wrung-out gambler at the finish. Mostly, he wanted something good for his horse.

"He's a hard-trier and he became the barn mascot," the trainer said. "I love horses like that."

Racing for Glen Bennett's LC Racing, Smooth B won the Marshall Jenney Handicap in August and the off-the-turf Turf Monster in September to get past $1 million in lifetime earnings and earn a winter break. Bred by St. Omer's Farm and WynOaks Farm, the son of Weigelia and the Disco Rico mare Katarica Disco was supposed to get back to work in Florida, but weather canceled a mid-January van ride.

"He did it the hard way, a little bit at a time," Reid said of reaching the seven-figure mark in career earnings. "Like always with him, we'll pick our spots. He's run in the Marshall Jenney six years in a row so that's one of our spots. He's been good to us so we'll be good to him."

– Joe Clancy

Post Time

The very definition of high energy, Post Time delighted witnesses local and national all year with morning antics and acrobatics that included walking to the track on two – instead of four – legs. While not nearly as dramatic, his afternoon performances spurred plenty of conversation too with four wins, three seconds and two thirds while racing from Maryland's Laurel Park to the Breeders' Cup in California.

The Maryland-bred's $975,000 in earnings led all regional-breds in 2024 and he claimed the top spot in the final *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred*/The Racing Biz poll after winning the Jennings, General George-G3, Carter-G2 and Polynesian stakes and placing in three Grade 1 tries.

All that activity made what came next an easy decision as Ellen Charles of Hillwood Stable and trainer Brittany Russell sent the now 5-year-old to Foxhall Equine in Fallston, Md., for a vacation. There, the son of Frosted bred by Tom, Chris and Brooke Bowman and Milton Higgins III walked on a water treadmill, got turned out in an indoor round pen and otherwise tried to relax as much as his big personality would let him.

Russell communicated regularly with former trainer Dove Houghton, a rehab technician at Foxhall, and loved the updates.

"He's doing great," Russell said in mid-January. "Dove sends me pictures and gets me updates. He's still on a break,

BARRIE REIGHTLER

Maryland-bred Post Time, the region's leader in 2024, enjoys some sun at Foxhall Equine this winter.

but he's full-on aqua-treading now so he's doing a little something. We plan on bringing him back the first part of February. There's no definite timeline. I want to get him back as long as the weather cooperates and when we can actually start riding him."

Over about 15 months, from September 2023 through Dec. 7, 2024, Post Time started a dozen times including trips to Kentucky, Aqueduct (three times), Saratoga (twice) and Del Mar. That schedule and competitive races would wear on anyone, and Russell thinks her stable star appreciated time away from training and racing.

"He did a lot of traveling, ran a lot of good races," the trainer said. "Dove knew him because he was there before for a layup, and she said when he came in he seemed like himself but after a couple weeks he turned into a different kind of beast. It makes you kind of wonder, was he actually tired at the end of last year? He shows up and does whatever we ask, everywhere we take him, but it was nice to hear somebody say that he's doing better since he's been there, that's he's improving and showing that."

Russell didn't pick out specific targets for her stable star, but start checking the entries in April. Major stops at Saratoga,

EQUI-PHOTO, INC. (2)

Pennsylvania-bred Foxy Junior heads to one of her six wins in 2024.

New Jersey-bred He'spuregold could try for a fifth consecutive win in the Irish War Cry Stakes this year.

where he was second in the Metropolitan Handicap-G1 and third in the Whitney Stakes-G1, and a return to the Breeders' Cup (second in the Dirt Mile-G1 last year) would be dream scenarios.

"The question for this year is, 'Are we going to try him a little farther?' " Russell said. "We'll probably prep him somewhere local and get him started the right way and then look on from there. In a perfect world he takes us back to Saratoga. Those are goals we want to look on for him, but he's going to tell us. If we do something similar to what we did last year, hopefully we're one step closer in at least one of them."

– Joe Clancy

Foxy Junior

Bernie Houghton had to fight the urge. Foxy Junior had just won three stakes in a row, culminating with a win in the Thirty Eight Go Go at Laurel Park Nov. 9. The Pennsylvania-based trainer knew it was time for a break for the Pennsylvania-bred daughter of Cuba.

"I just stopped her for no reason. She had a hard campaign, and I wanted to give her a little break," Houghton said in January. "It was hard after her win; you want to keep going. I told the owners, we're doing the best thing and if she comes back as good or better, we'll have a lot of fun with her."

Owned and bred by Dianne Stern, the dark bay filly won once as a 2-year-old and twice as a 3-year-old. Houghton freshened her up for her 4-year-old season and expected her to improve. Improve to six wins from seven starts and three straight stakes?

"Well . . . no, not really," Houghton said. "We did the same thing [in 2023]. I always liked her, I thought she was a pretty nice filly but this year, she just got good. Every time she ran, she came out of them better and better. Just maturing, a little break. Hence why I did it again this winter."

Foxy Junior began 2024 with an 11½-length romp against allowance rivals at Penn National in May. She tacked on two more allowance wins before finishing fourth in the Princess of Sylmar Stakes at Presque Isle Downs in July. It would be her only loss of the season. She took the Plum Pretty against Pennsylvania-breds at Parx in September, the Maryland Million Distaff against Maryland-sired foes in October and the Thirty Eight Go Go against open fillies and mares in

"She'll start back on the first of February. We might jump her up a little higher, but I like the Maryland Million and the Pennsylvania-bred stakes. I could see her doing what she did last year and then some."

– Trainer Bernie Houghton, about Foxy Junior

November. With nine wins from 19 starts for $332,669, Foxy Junior deserved a break.

"She's right here on the farm. She loves the break. She enjoys it," Houghton said from his family's Sylmar Farm in Christiana, Pa. "She'll start back on the first of February. We might jump her up a little higher, but I like the Maryland Million and the Pennsylvania-bred stakes. I could see her doing what she did last year and then some."

Houghton splits his time between 150 horses on the farm and 30 at Penn National, knowing that you never know. Stern sent Foxy Junior to Sylmar to break, needed a trainer, asked Houghton's mother Betsy for advice and the rest is Pennsylvania-bred history.

"She's been in the game a long time," Houghton said of the owner. "She sent her to us to break and she asked Mom if I would train her. She naturally said yes. With the babies you always have hopes."

– Sean Clancy

He'spuregold

Kelly Breen makes a lot of trips to The Home Depot.

The trainer's youngest son, Declan, is a member of a rocket club. The sixth grader names all his rockets after He'spuregold, the nine-time winning New Jersey-bred who has won four consecutive editions of the Irish War Cry Stakes at Monmouth Park.

"I've always got to go get gold spray paint for his rockets," Breen said in January. "He's been coming to the barn during the summers, and I don't know why he's taken a liking to him, but he's his favorite horse.

Declan has good taste. Bred and owned by John Bowers Jr., He'spuregold has earned $631,170 in 30 starts. Last year, he won his fourth Irish War Cry, a New Jersey-bred turf stakes, in July and tacked on the Red Bank Stakes in September.

As usual, the bay gelding freshened up in Ocala, Fla. for the winter before aiming to rejoin Breen in March.

"Mr. Bowers gives him what horses used to always get – time off. He's a throwback," said Breen, who could have been talking about the horse and the owner. "He's just a warrior. He's so nice to be around. It's funny to say it, because you say it a lot about horses who are nice horses – and he is a nice horse – but he is just a pleasure to be around."

He'spuregold finished second and third in two starts as a 2-year-old and has won at least two races while running at least six times in every season since.

"He's always been honest. He's a warrior," Breen said. "He tries in the morning, he likes training, he's a competitor. If he was a regular athlete, he would be an Olympian or an all-star or a Hall of Famer. That's him. They're just a little different."

A fifth-generation homebred for Bowers, 7-year-old He'spuregold is out of Smart N Classy, winner of the Grade 3 Eatontown in 2005.

"He's had some program. This horse and one other horse are his last two horses, he's stopped his breeding program. This is it," Breen said. "It's tough to see because he's taken such good care of all his horses, even ones who might have been claimed from him. He's had me claim them to retire them. He's got a little farm not far from where I grew up. Route 34. His bloodlines have been around, he's had some really nice horses."

As for the 2025 Irish War Cry . . .

"I would assume so. I would assume so," Breen said. "We'll try to get him a race in Florida before we leave here and get him ready to go back and all systems go for Monmouth Park again this year."

Order the gold paint.

– Sean Clancy

Simply Joking

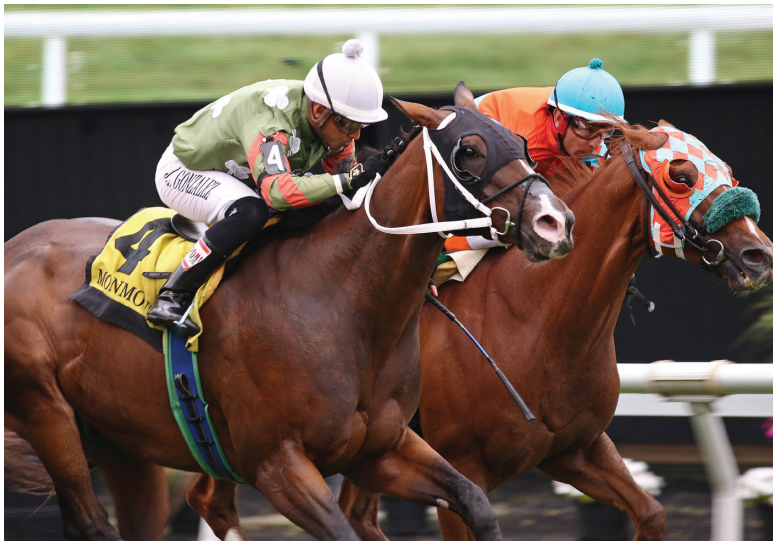
Debut in a stakes?

Whit Beckman wasn't worried.

The fifth-year trainer unleashed Simply Joking in the Letellier Memorial at Fair Grounds Dec. 21. The Pennsylvania-

HODGES PHOTOGRAPHY

Unbeaten in two starts, Pennsylvania-bred Simply Joking looks to make an impact in the 3-year-old filly division this year.



EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

New Jersey-bred Smithwick's Spice (left) comes off a five-win season in 2024 for owner/breeder New Spice Stable.

bred daughter of Practical Joke backed up Beckman's confidence with a neck win in the 6-furlong stakes.

"I didn't have to do much thinking, she's just so talented," Beckman said. "There were a lot of little things that went into it, but she came in with Her Laugh and they've been workmates from day one. They've always shown they were talented, but we didn't have a gauge on things. When Her Laugh won her debut so easily and then came back and won the Untapable, that gave me a lot of confidence that Simply Joking was going to be a next step up. A stake. Short field. It just made sense."

Bred in Pennsylvania by Larry Karp's Barlar operation, Simply Joking made it 2-for-2 with a win in the Fasig-Tipton Silverbulletday Stakes at Fair Grounds Jan. 18. Owned by Grantley Acres, Ryan Conner and Berkels0813, the bay filly has earned $153,000, more than double her $65,000 sale price.

Barlar purchased Allude in foal to Divine Park for $17,000 in November 2011. Three years later, the Orientate mare sold, in foal to Shackleford, for $100,000. In between, Allude produced two stakes winners, including Imply. Born in 2013, the Pennsylvania-bred daughter of E Dubai won 12 races, including seven stakes, and earned $772,728 for Karp and trainer Bernie Houghton. Her first two foals are Drum Roll Please, in 2021, and Simply Joking in 2022. Drum Roll Please won the Jerome in 2024. Simply Joking could be even better.

"My confidence was pretty high," Beckman said. "With this filly, the way she had prepared herself, there has been no stress about it. She just confirmed it. I knew what she was going to do. She's been that good."

Geoff Nixon of Grantley Acres, a 127-acre farm in Midway, Ky., purchased Simply Joking at Keeneland September. She went to Travis Durr in South Carolina and then Matt Hogan in Lexington before Beckman.

"Sometimes when a horse wins you get way too far into plans and futures, but the Cotillion would be an absolute target," Beckman said. "I know she's that good. It's a matter of keeping her safe and sound and letting her do the rest. When you see her, she's a specimen, she's got much more than talent."

A former assistant to Chad Brown and Todd Pletcher, Beckman knows a good horse when he sees one, going back to Simply Joking's sire, Practical Joke. Trained by Brown, the son of Into Mischief won the Grade 1 Allen Jerkens in 2017.

"I was lucky to have had the experience of working for Todd and Chad. I was able to see what exceptional talents look like. You got to see how they behave in the barn, you got to see everything. You put it together and you recognize it," Beckman said. "I was in Saratoga in 2016 when Practical Joke came in as a 2-year-old. Just one of those absolute professional racehorses. He didn't do anything wrong, mind on running all the time, easy to train."

Daughter like father?

"She's got a little bit of him in her," Beckman said. "She's a filly so there's a little more anticipation in her but still a really, really solid way of handling things and obviously talented."

– Sean Clancy

Smithwick's Spice

Douglas Nunn made a deal, mostly with himself, a few years ago while training New Spice Stable's Smithwick's Spice.

"I've thought about slowing down and retiring, and I keep saying, 'When he retires, I'll retire,' " Nunn said in late January. "Yeah, well, he doesn't want to retire. He's that horse that just wants to keep pounding along."

So, maybe much like the Carolina Panthers and their loyal fans, Nunn figures he'll keep pounding along, too.

"I've had the whole family, so it's been pretty neat," Nunn said. "I had the mother and everything, so it's been a long journey. And these owners have been just wonderful people."

Smithwick's Spice, the pride of Robert Matthies' New Spice breeding program out of New Jersey, enjoyed his best season at age 8 in 2024 with five wins in 14 starts and earnings of $273,775. The five wins included the Leinster Turf Dash in February at Tampa Bay Downs and the Select Stakes in August at Monmouth Park.

The son of Frost Giant will look to add to his resume in 2025 as part of Nunn's six-horse stable, based in Florida at Palm Meadows Training Center in the winter and at Monmouth Park the rest of the year.

Nunn said the gelding out of the winning Good and Tough mare Spicy McHaggis acts more like a 2-year-old and credits his longtime client for Smithwick's Spice's longtime development.

"He's been a big backer of mine and is always supportive," Nunn said. "He lets me do what I need to do, whether the horses need time or not."

Nunn trained Spicy McHaggis, also a New Jersey-bred, to three victories in 17 starts and earnings of $67,355 exclusively in the Mid-Atlantic. She retired after finishing next-to-last in a $5,000 claiming race in mid-August 2009 at Monmouth and Nunn wasn't so sure what should be next for the ornery mare.

"She was a crazy horse; she was bad from Day 1 and after she retired I told my owner they should probably find her a home," Nunn said. "They said they'd planned to breed her . . . I kind of second-guessed that, but looking back now all the foals have shown some talent, one made over $100,000 but they always had issues." Smithwick's Spice is by far her best of three foals, with $729,042 in career earnings.

"Thankfully we have the option to run Jersey-breds on the grass. They didn't used to write those races. He can run on the dirt but the turf is easier on them, a softer landing so to speak."

– Tom Law

COADY PHOTOGRAPHY

An eight-time winner in 2024, West Virginia-bred Overnight Pow Wow eyes more success this year.

Overnight Pow Wow

Bittersweet.

For Cyndy McKee, an eight-win campaign by Beau Ridge Farm homebred Overnight Pow Wow was simply that. Born in 2021, the daughter of Beau Ridge stallion star Fiber Sonde and the Indian Charlie mare Holy Pow Wow was meant to be for McKee's husband, John, to train.

The West Virginia stalwart died Feb. 25, 2023.

Less than a year later, Overnight Pow Wow won her debut, the start of an eight-win campaign that included the Its Binn Too Long, Sylvia Bishop Memorial and Cavada on West Virginia Breeders' Classics night. The latter completed a four-stakes haul for McKee on West Virginia's biggest night at the races.

"I didn't want to sell her," McKee said in January. "I wanted John to keep one of them and have a really nice horse to train instead of selling them all the time. Unfortunately, he didn't get to train her. And then I was afraid I would mess her up."

No chance.

JOE LABOZZETTA / COGLINESE PHOTOGRAPHY

A Grade 1 winner in 2024, New Jersey-bred Book'em Danno returns as a 4-year-old.

Overnight Pow Wow joined a star-studded list of full-siblings produced by Fiber Sonde, a $8,000 purchase in 2007, and Holy Pow Wow, a $5,000 purchase in 2013.

Late Night Pow Wow won 12 of 15 starts, including two Grade 3 stakes, for $700,400. Duncan Idaho has won 10 races, including two stakes, for $245,793. Five-time stakes winner and 17-time winner Muad'dib surpassed $1 million in career earnings in 2024. Brilliant but they weren't for Beau Ridge.

"I wanted to keep one," McKee said. "It ended up I didn't have to sell her."

McKee backed off her stable star after winning an allowance race Nov. 1. Sent to the farm for some controlled turnout and some sessions on the walker, the gray filly cut that short.

"She is just wonderful. She was on the farm for a while, but we haven't had the greatest of weather, so I decided to take her back to the track because she was getting crazy," McKee said in January. "She gave everything she had. The only disappointment and I wasn't disappointed in her, but I wished she could have hung on for third in the Charles Town Oaks-G3 to get graded stakes-placed. That's all I was hoping for.

At 44-1, Overnight Pow Wow led for a long way in the $750,000 stakes and missed second by a neck and a half-length. McKee expects Overnight Pow Wow to be back for the Original Gold Stakes at Charles Town in April. Like everyone in racing – in life – McKee will be balancing the bitter and the sweet.

"It was hard right after the Classic," she said. "Somebody said, 'You have to give yourself some credit.' I give myself a little credit, but you've got to give him credit for getting this thing going, for making my life easier where I didn't have the

"As you go through it, you start to take it for granted. But over Christmas I sat back and thought about it and I can't believe it. He got us to Saudi. The first horse we ever ran at Saratoga, we won a Grade 1. He took us on a ride we never thought we would be on."

– Atlantic Six Racing's Jay Briscione, about Book'em Danno

bills and all the things he had to deal with. He did so much of the hard work and didn't get to enjoy the spoils of it. It's not easy but I know he would be proud of us."

Holy Pow Wow died in December.

"It was horrible. I was hard hit," McKee said. "We've been given some incredible gifts. Fiber Sonde, Pow Wow . . . they built this farm."

– Sean Clancy

Book'em Danno

The connections of Book'em Danno enjoyed their two trips to Saratoga last year so much, they'd like to go back two more times in 2025.

After a grueling 2024 campaign that ended with a fifth in the Cigar Mile-G2, millionaire New Jersey-bred Book'em Danno earned a well-deserved break in Ocala, Fla. He arrived at trainer Derek Ryan's barn at Tampa Bay Downs Jan. 17 to start preparing for a 2025 campaign.

Jay Briscione, who runs the Atlantic Six Syndicate which bought the now 4-year-old privately as a yearling, said the target list includes about a dozen potential races, most likely starting in March. Two major goals are the True North Stakes-G2, at Saratoga over Belmont Stakes weekend in June, and the Forego Stakes-G1, a staple of the Travers Day undercard in late August.

"I'm not sure we will go three-quarters [6 furlongs] with him," Briscione said. "We will look at 6½ to a mile. He's an April 27 foal so he could progress in his 4-year-old year."

If the son of Bucchero can duplicate his 2024 performance, Atlantic Six is in for another exciting and profitable experience. From a head loss to Japanese star Forever Young in the Saudi Derby-G3, to a Grade 1 score in the Woody Stephens on the Belmont Day undercard, Book'em Danno gave his owners a year they will never forget.

"As you go through it, you start to take it for granted," Briscione said. "But over Christmas I sat back and thought about it and I can't believe it. He got us to Saudi. The first horse we ever ran at Saratoga, we won a Grade 1. He took us on a ride we never thought we would be on."

While Book'em Danno ended 2024 with three losses – third in the H. Allen Jerkens-G1, second in the Perryville-G3 and that Cigar Mile – you could argue that he didn't get a clean trip in any of those races. Book'em Danno underwent a nuclear scan after the Cigar Mile and his connections were pleased with the results.

"All the physical stuff came back good," Briscione said. "It was a tough campaign. He danced every dance and showed up every time."

Bred by Greg Kilka and Bright View Farm, the gelding finished the year with a line of 3-2-1 from seven starts and $807,500 in earnings, third behind Post Time and Neecie Marie among regional-breds. For his career Book'em Danno is 6-3-1 and $1,038,125 in 11 starts. Atlantic Six offered a 25-percent interest at the Keeneland Championship Sale at Del Mar during Breeders' Cup Week, but it was a $475,000 RNA.

– Paul Halloran

Around the Horn

Inside Stunt, bred in Maryland by John Davison, won nine races while making starts in January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November and December. The Greenpointcrusader gelding opened the year with two wins at Mahoning Valley for trainer Anthony Farrior, got claimed for $8,000 from the second and then won seven times for Nestor Rivera while never starting for a claiming price again . . . **Uptown Amanda,** bred in Pennsylvania by Uptowncharlybrown Stud, put together a nine-win season at Puerto Rico's Camarero Racetrack. The daughter of Uptowncharlybrown ran her winning streak to eight Jan. 4. She's 15-for-24 lifetime including three starts at Parx Racing in 2022. Only two horses in North America – Tennessee Moon (13) and Spikezone (11) won more races in 2024.

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Little Bit of That, a Maryland-bred by Great Notion, won eight (and finished second twice) in 10 starts – all at Charles Town – for trainer Ronney Brown and wife Nicole. West Virginia-bred **Jazz With Denis**, also won eight – six at Charles Town and two at Mountaineer. The Denis of Cork gelding started 17 times in 2024 . . . Pennsylvania-bred filly **Caprice** nearly ran the table in her 2-year-old season for owner/breeder Runnymoore Racing and trainer Cal Lynch, winning six of seven (with a second). The daughter of Golden Lad closed the year with three stakes wins at Laurel Park . . . Old pro **Clubman** went out a winner with a starter allowance score Dec. 22 – his 20th lifetime win from 86 starts. The Maryland-bred son of Not For Love earned $751,007 for a variety of connections capped by owner/trainer Joanne Shankle . . . **Pascaline**, who won a Colonial Downs maiden race in August and the Laurel Futurity in September, missed another stakes start in November when he needed surgery to remove an ankle chip. Bred in West Virginia by Jim Miller, the 3-year-old was back in training with Arnaud Delacour at Tampa Bay Downs, and looking for a return race. "If all goes well we'll probably look for a race in March," said Tom Bellhouse of West Point Thoroughbreds. "The Tampa Bay Derby might come up too soon, but I think the Virginia Derby on the new schedule at Colonial could work if we can make it." That race is part of a three-day meet at the Virginia track March 15 . . . Virginia-bred **Gigante** began 2024 with starts in two early graded stakes, then missed more than six months before winning a stakes in December. One of the new millionaires in 2024, the now 5-year-old bred by Ann Mudge Backer and Smitten Farm opened 2025 with an off-the-turf stakes win at Fair Grounds for trainer Steve Asmussen in January . . . Another new millionaire, West Virginia-bred **Muad'dib**, extended his career with three more wins in 2024 to get to 17 for his career. Overnight Pow Wow's full-brother won his first two starts of 2024 and his last. In between, he placed in three stakes including his fourth consecutive try in the West Virginia Breeders Classic (two wins, a second and a third) in October for owner David Raim and trainer Jeff Runco . . . Pennsylvania-bred **Maximus Meridius** salvaged his career after being gelded last summer, winning two of his final three starts including Aqueduct's Gravesend Stakes Dec. 28, and trainer Butch Reid was looking at a return trip to New York for the Toboggan Feb. 1 . . . Stablemate **Uncle Heavy** exited last year's Pennsylvania Derby-G1 with a minor injury and was enjoying the snow on the farm with Reid's brother Mark in January. He'll return when the better weather does. "We thought he was a bit of an underachiever," Butch Reid said. "I'm hoping this little bit of time helps him mature and step up to the next level." ■

Regional Success by the Numbers

New Millionaires

Nine horses bred in the Mid-Atlantic became millionaires in 2024. Their lifetime records (through 2024) reflect the success:

Horse (State)	*YOB*	*Sts*	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*Earnings*
Post Time (Md.)	2020	15	9	3	3	$1,227,910
Neecie Marie (Pa.)	2020	15	6	3	1	1,154,688
Gigante (Va.)	2020	18	7	1	2	1,127,650
Coastal Mission (W.Va.)	2019	26	14	5	1	1,121,653
Jaxon Traveler (Md.)	2018	34	12	8	5	1,077,798
Smooth B (Pa.)	2015	63	12	13	9	1,045,097
Book'em Danno (N.J.)	2021	11	6	3	1	1,038,125
Morning Matcha (Pa.)	2019	29	8	7	7	1,035,820
Muad'dib (W.Va.)	2017	29	17	4	5	1,016,793

Top Performers in 2024

Mid-Atlantic-bred horses who earned $500,000 or more in 2024:

Horse (State)	*YOB*	*Sire*	*Sts*	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*Earnings*
Post Time (Md.)	2020	Frosted	9	4	3	2	$975,000
Neecie Marie (Pa.)	2020	Cross Traffic	6	2	1	1	888,988
Book'em Danno (N.J.)	2021	Bucchero	7	3	2	1	807,500
Mindframe (Md.)	2021	Constitution	4	2	2	0	647,360
Coastal Mission (W.Va.)	2019	Great Notion	9	3	2	0	535,000
Future Is Now (Md.)	2020	Great Notion	9	5	1	1	513,155

State Leaders

Leading earners by state bred in 2024:

State	*Horse*	*Sts*	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*Earnings*
Md.	Post Time	9	4	3	2	$975,000
N.C.	Volleyballprincess	2	1	0	1	37,300
N.J.	Book'em Danno	7	3	2	1	807,500
Pa.	Neecie Marie	6	2	1	1	888,988
S.C.	Stop the Cap	12	5	1	3	125,250
Va.	Determined Kingdom	6	4	0	1	285,988
W.Va.	Coastal Mission	9	3	2	0	535,000

Mid-Atlantic Poll

The top 10 horses of 2024 in the final Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred/The Racing Biz voting poll. Parentheses denote first-place votes. Points determined on voting scale. Voted on by a panel of media and racing experts.

Horse	*State*	*Pts*
Post Time (11)	Md.	83
Book'em Danno (1)	N.J.	72
Neecie Marie	Pa.	45
Future Is Now	Md.	42
Coastal Mission	W.Va.	38
Mindframe	Md.	27
Roses for Debra	Pa.	18
Jaxon Traveler	Md.	9
Gigante (1)	Va.	7
Tufani	Va.	4

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Horse	CI	Mares Bred	2024 Fee
AMERICANREVOLUTION	**1.44**	**163**	**$12,500**
Arcangelo	1.37	154	$35,000
Two Phil's	1.35	159	$12,500
Proxy	1.27	125	$25,000
Zandon	1.14	158	$12,500

Horse	CPI	Mares Bred	2024 Fee
AMERICANREVOLUTION	**2.00**	**163**	**$12,500**
Arcangelo	1.89	154	$35,000
Arabian Lion	1.79	178	$30,000
Two Phil's	1.79	159	$12,500
Zandon	1.62	158	$12,500

* CI (Comparable Index) indicates the quality of mares bred as producers, and CPI (Class Performance Index) indicates the racing quality of the mares bred.

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Plowing Forward

KNAUF TAKES REINS, LOOKS AHEAD, IN MARYLAND

By Joe Clancy

If you see Bill Knauf around Laurel Park this winter, maybe leave the weather questions until later in the conversation. In early January, the new president and general manager of the new Maryland racing operator The Maryland Jockey Club was in the midst of an entry-level course in snow removal and its impact on a racetrack.

"What up with that?" he said with a laugh a few days after a snowstorm blanketed the area. The snow arrived a few days after the MJC officially took over management of Laurel from the 1/ST Racing-owned company of basically the same name (the new version adds The, with a capital T, to the corporate identity) and was, admittedly, a little bit of a curveball.

"Snow was not on my list of things to be overly concerned about," Knauf said. "I had to ask our CFO what the snow budget was and his answer was not what we had just spent."

Such is life for a racetrack executive with a winter program in the Mid-Atlantic. Knauf spent 26 years at Monmouth Park, which saw plenty of snow in that time but only raced in the summer. Snow on the track at the Jersey Shore? Let it melt. Snow on the track in Maryland? Wait for it to stop snowing, then blow it off with oversized blowers attached to tractors. Carefully.

Don't worry, Laurel wasn't about to stop moving snow off the track, but winter weather was one more challenge in what amounted to a complete overhaul of the state's Thoroughbred racing over the past two years. First, Gov. Wes Moore created the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority to study other models, solicit feedback, tap into expertise and craft a path forward. Second, the MTROA chose a non-profit ownership model to oversee racing at a rebuilt Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore and a training center at a future site. Third, MTROA negotiated with 1/ST and parent company The Stronach Group to create a transfer formula. The numbers keep going, but in outline form . . . Pimlico will be rebuilt, the training center will be at Shamrock Farm in Woodbine, Laurel Park will close and be sold/developed by 1/ST and a new operator – headed by Knauf – will run the whole show. The handover happened Jan. 1 with the first live racing card slated for Jan. 17 – weather dependent, of course.

Knauf was anxious to see horses on the track, with a caveat.

"I'm very excited for it, I really am, but part of me is wishing I had three more months to plan," he said. "Every night I come home and there were 100 things on my list and I think I checked off five. I'm starting to realize we can only change or implement so many things before [racing starts]. It's going to be a run-up for the first year and most changes might be seen in the fall. You can't change too much operationally because we're here and we're racing."

Knauf was not necessarily looking for a job when contacted about the Maryland opening. The Schenectady, N.Y., native and University of Arizona racetrack management program graduate had been at Monmouth since 1998 – most recently as vice president of business development – and figured he'd someday retire from the track. The caller simply asked if Knauf would be interested in having a deeper conversation about the Maryland post. Knauf was flattered, but said no and hung up. Standing next to her husband at the time, Karen Knauf asked a simple question.

"Shouldn't you learn more about it?"

"If I take this call and you're OK with it, I'm going to keep listening," Bill replied. "Are you ready to pick up and move to Maryland if this turns into something?"

JERRY DZIERWINSKI

Former Monmouth Park executive Bill Knauf moved to Baltimore to head up the new version of The Maryland Jockey Club.

"Absolutely," Karen said.

Knauf dove in, learned far more than he knew, asked questions, got answers and "was hooked." He and Karen moved to Baltimore's historic Fell's Point area in October.

"We had a suburban home and we'd never lived in a downtown," Knauf said of the choice. "We've always loved Baltimore, we knew Fell's Point. There's sort of an allure to it and we said, 'Let's have a lifestyle of walking to restaurants and bakeries and shops.'"

Founded in 1763, the waterfront neighborhood wasn't the only attraction to the job.

"It's a very special opportunity and I wanted to be part of it," he said. "I grew up in upstate New York so I was always tuned into racing in Maryland and the Preakness. How many times in your lifetime could you say you could be part of building a new racetrack and then of course run it?"

Knauf spent the first two months as a consultant and worked on the details of the transition of the actual business

"The overall goal is having some semblance of year-round racing here, whatever that means, and we're all aligned in that but at the same time we need to make sure this non-profit entity can remain financially stable"
– Bill Knauf

with MTROA chair Greg Cross and interim CEO Corey Johnsen. The task came with concerns about the staff, contracts, wagering regulations, budgets and a myriad of other details near and far to horses actually racing on a track. Once all that work was completed, and the calendar turned to 2025, Knauf could focus on the real opportunities ahead. The MJC staff largely stayed in place, a major asset according to Knauf.

"That's one of the reasons I felt very comfortable taking this position to be honest," he said. "I talked to a number of people about the folks here. Many people have been here 30 to 40 years. They're seasoned, well-respected racetrack executives from the top all the way down. That makes it a lot easier."

Knauf isn't blind to the challenges. The old Maryland Jockey Club didn't show a profit and 1/ST lobbied for a far shorter racing season to help correct that. Owners, trainers and breeders point to a longer season as a key to their success. Somewhere in the middle lies the answer, Knauf said. The 2025 season includes 120 live racing days – 31 fewer than 2024 – and Maryland will not race during the Colonial Downs summer meet in Virginia. Knauf hopes those changes, and others, can help grow field sizes, reverse sliding handle numbers and increase individual race purses.

"Wagering drives everything and right now, the track is seeing some lower times than it ever has," Knauf said. "We need to focus on putting a better product on the racetrack, and making the bettors aware of that product. Not to say they haven't done that at certain times of the year where the product is very good, but part of our immediate action is to put some marketing effort into that and make people around country aware of what a great betting product it is."

Along with that effort, Knauf talked about bringing more energy to the building – Laurel for now, Pimlico somewhat later – to increase on-site attendance and exposure to wagering opportunities. Some of that is sheer marketing. Other changes will come over time. Better wagering numbers and more guests at the track translate to higher revenue for all facets of the game – track operations, purse accounts, breeding incentive funds and so on.

"We're going to work with horsemen, and the breeding industry is tied to that too, any way possible to incentivize them to recharge that part of the industry," Knauf said. "We have a little bit of a partnership with Colonial Downs in July and August. Maybe there's something down the road that can be worked out between the breeding programs. That's being explored."

Maryland has weathered plenty in the last five years as ideas for a new model tried to take root. Pimlico has been slated for demolition and reconstruction for years with various models put forward by 1/ST to ensure success at that track and/or Laurel. None of them worked. This one, backed by $400 million in bonds issued by the state and a new state-appointed authority, sprouted.

"The overall goal is having some semblance of year-round racing here, whatever that means, and we're all aligned in that but at the same time we need to make sure this non-profit entity can remain financially stable," Knauf said. "Sometimes, reducing dates allows that. It's a reduction in purses and there are operational savings. Usually, a byproduct of that is a stronger product on the track because you're consolidating."

The future, Knauf insisted, is bright despite a pile of unknowns far higher than a January snowdrift and a past that weighs on wary participants. In a January meeting, someone asked if he thought all the plans and changes were "actually going to happen." As someone with a new Maryland driver's license, Knauf sure hopes so but he understands the doubt.

"There have been tumultuous times over the last five years . . . and I realize I don't have a good grasp on everything, but I get reminders that the people – breeders, horsemen, fans, everyone – of this state have been put through a lot recently. It's not anybody's fault. It was just the situation. We're going to have instill a lot of confidence that this is going to happen and we're going to change it."

Snow removal included.

VIRGINIA
OAKS

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SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025

$500,000 VIRGINIA DERBY 1 ⅛ MILES

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3rd: 15 points
4th: 10 points
5th: 5 points

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SPRING RACING MARCH 13 - 15

JIM MCCUE

Horses break from the gate in the first race under the auspices of The Maryland Jockey Club, a non-profit created to operate racing in the state, Jan. 17. Favorite Carroll Girl (6) stormed to victory by 11¼ lengths.

Shamrock chosen for training center

The new training center, a central component of a plan to strengthen the state's racing industry, will be built on Shamrock Farm near Woodbine in Carroll County, the Maryland Thoroughbred Racetrack Operating Authority announced in December, pending the acquisition of the 300-acre property.

Designed to accommodate more than 800 horses with room for future expansion, the facility is 24 miles from Pimlico Race Course. That proximity aligns with Pimlico's redevelopment set to begin in 2025. Together, Pimlico and the new training facility will provide the modern infrastructure and features needed to ensure the viability of Thoroughbred racing in Maryland. The Carroll County facility will preserve critical green space, with ample grazing and turnout areas in a pastoral setting close to Pimlico.

"Our goal is to design and build one of the great equine training centers in the world," said Greg Cross, chairman of the MTROA. "A rigorous examination of many locations in the region showed that this site provides the best combination of size, cost and construction approval process. The collaborative decision to build at Shamrock Farm included input from Maryland's horsemen and other key stakeholders. This project truly continues the path for our racing industry to thrive."

The facility is expected to contain a 1-mile dirt oval built with the same material and layout as the Pimlico track. The facility will have at least 800 stalls, with housing, kitchen areas and a recreation center for stable-area workers. The combination of a rebuilt Pimlico augmented by an industry-run training center will place Maryland's $2 billion-per-year horse industry on solid footing and position it to thrive into the 21st century.

Owned by the Rooney family, Shamrock Farm had been under final consideration for acquisition for more than a year, after a consultant retained by the authority, Populous, ranked it highest on a scoring mechanism that evaluated criteria including location, natural resources, topography, transportation and access, utility infrastructure, jurisdictional approvals, size, and cost of acquisition and development.

Shamrock has operated as a Thoroughbred farm since being purchased by Art Rooney in 1948. At first, the farm was a place for Rooney's lay-ups but it soon became a stallion farm and stood the likes of Christopher R, Dancing Count, Thirty Eight Paces, Preakness winner Aloma's Ruler, Eastern Echo, Baederwood and more recently Outflanker, Rainbow Heir and others. ■

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$25,000
BREEDER AWARD
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By **MUNNINGS,** out of graded stakes-winning **MADEIRA PARK**

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$25,000
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Fastest winning Equi-Speed rating recorded in PA at 2 from Beverly Park/ Alejandro class of 2026*

*All foals from the combined 2026 foal crops of Beverly Park and Alejandro are eligible

ALEJANDRO

Curlin's Best Bred Son Standing in Pennsylvania

$25,000
BREEDER AWARD
1st PA stakes winner from Alejandro/Beverly Park class of 2026*

$25,000
BREEDER AWARD
1st PA winner from Alejandro/Beverly Park class of 2026*

By Leading Sire **CURLIN,**
out of Grade 1-winning
RACHEL'S VALENTINA

- **Alejandro**
  - **CURLIN** — Leading Sire, 2007 & 2008 Horse of the Year
    - **Smart Strike**
    - **Sherriff's Deputy**
  - **RACHEL'S VALENTINA** — G1 Stakes Winner
    - Bernardini
    - **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** — 2009 Horse of the Year

- **FOUR** career wins and **20** top-3 finishes
- Durable runner with 35 career starts over five seasons
- Lifetime earnings over **$450,000**
- His sire **CURLIN** was 2007 and 2008 Horse of the Year
- Second dam **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** was 2009 Horse of the Year

$25,000
BREEDER AWARD
Fastest winning Equi-Speed rating recorded in PA at 2 from Alejandro/Beverly Park class of 2026*

$1,500 LFSN

or $3,000 for 2 breeds and receive a Lifetime Breeding Award

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*All foals from the combined 2026 foal crops of Beverly Park and Alejandro are eligible

Couple of Winners

RUNCOS ENJOY ANOTHER BANNER YEAR IN WEST VIRGINIA

Story by Paul Halloran ■ *Photographs by Katherine Turnbull*

Jockey Jeff Runco finished second on Come Sail Away for trainer Susan Motch at Charles Town Jan. 14, 1984.

Jockey Susan Motch finished first – in a dead heat – on Fantastic Power at Charles Town on July 12, 1985, giving Jeff Runco his first win as a trainer.

The two became a coupled entry when they were married Nov. 9, 1985, and, four decades later, the West Virginians are still winning.

Jeff has justifiably gotten his share of accolades over the years, which will happen when you win 4,796 races (through 2024), more than $68.5 million in purses and 16 training titles at your hometown racetrack.

Susan's role is more behind the scenes, running their Coleswood Farm in Kearneysville, overseeing the breeding operation, picking out horses at the sales and handling the bookkeeping – all critical to the success of one of the Mid-Atlantic's most thriving racing operations.

"She's instrumental in all of our success," Jeff said. "We do a lot of talking and figuring out what we're going to do with our outfit, the horses we're going to buy, the horses we're going to breed, where we're going to run certain horses. We discuss all of that on a daily basis."

Susan may not necessarily relish all the work – she could do without the accounting – but she is very much a team player.

"It all works out between the two of us," she said. "We probably don't agree on everything all the time, but for the most part we do as far as recognizing what the horses need and how we want the business to run. It has gone well. There's just a lot of work involved."

While they are both involved in all aspects of the operation, the majority of Jeff's work is done at the track, with Susan taking care of business at the farm.

"For him, it's being at the track every single day, being on the pony, overseeing and inspecting the horses personally," she said. "There's just a lot of details. I think we're both pretty particular when it comes to how they're cared for, looking for things that aren't right. He's very good at assessing a horse's value and making sure they're running at the right level in the right conditions. You can't be right all the time about everything, but you just try to get up every day and keep it to the same standard, and hopefully it all falls into place."

Susan grew up on a farm in Florida, where her father was a launch engineer at Cape Canaveral. She showed ponies there and after moving to Virginia when she was in middle school. As a student at the University of Virginia, she got a job breaking yearlings for the late Noel Twyman, who had several Maryland-based trainers among his clients.

She started on the racetrack galloping horses, first in Maryland for Charlie Lewis and then in Florida. That led to a job as an exercise rider for Hall of Famer Woody Stephens in New York. While Susan eventually earned a bachelor's degree from Shepherd University in West Virginia and a master's in environmental biology from Hood College in Maryland, she considers the education she received from Stephens at least doctorate level.

Besides their racing and breeding business, Susan and Jeff Runco share a love of dogs and diving.

"First-class operation, obviously," Susan said. "He had really fabulous horses at that time. The year I was there [1979] is when he had Danzig as a 2-year-old and he had Smarten, who he won four derbies with his 3-year-old year. He just had some really nice horses during that time."

And what was it like working for Woodford Cefis Stephens?

"Perfect. He was a super nice man, about as good a horseman as you'll ever be around," Susan said of the training legend who won the Kentucky Derby twice, the Preakness once and the Belmont Stakes a record five consecutive times (1982-86) in a career that last from the 1930s to the 1990s. "He was very generous with his knowledge. I asked a lot of questions, and he would answer every single one of them. He would tell me all sorts of things about training horses. He was a very talkative fellow. He liked to share what he knew, which was great for me. There's no one better, that's for sure."

Susan had just started training horses on her own, running off a farm she lived on in Virginia, when she met Jeff the day he was named on her horse after the original jockey got sick.

"At that time, we didn't realize what it was going to turn into," she said. "He rode a couple for me down in Maryland as well. But we just started working together in the business, and he was very interested in training at that point. We just started putting it together with the horses we had. He had connections in Maryland and we had a few people send us horses. It took a lot of years, but one thing led to another, and we just kept building up the stable."

> "We started slowly going to Keeneland and buying one here, one there. It's a constant assessment of the quality of the mares we have."
>
> *– Susan Runco, about maintaining a small broodmare band*

Susan went back to riding races occasionally – flat and steeplechase – when Jeff was getting his training career up and running, though she termed the experience "an unremarkable venture." When their son, Jeremy, was born in 1986, she was back out of the saddle.

The Runcos' operation grew to the point that in 1994 Jeff had a career-high 656 starts, a year after winning a career-high 172 races. They were forced to relocate, however, when Charles Town closed at the end of that year due to the failure of a referendum to allow slot machines at the track. Their racing stable was based at Penn National for three and a half years, with Jeff and Susan returning to Charles Town in the fall of 1998.

"We didn't have a farm up there at that point, so we weren't breeding," Susan said. "But we were doing pretty well with the horses. I was actually working as an environmental consultant during the years we were up there because I didn't have a farm to go to."

Business boomed again as the West Virginia program rallied on the back of slots-infused purses and owner/breeder incentives. Runco-trained horses topped $1 million in annual earnings for the first time in 1999. The figure exceeded $2 million in 2006 and has stayed there, including a career-best $3.5 million in 2021. The 2024 season included 91 wins and $2,746,308 from 414 starts, 84 of the victories and $2.1 million in purses coming at Charles Town.

Anthony Farrior won the training crown with 116 wins, to 107 for Ronney Brown, but Runco checked in third and won the earnings title with far fewer starts.

If you had to summarize the Runcos' breeding operation in one word, "efficient" would be as good as any. They keep no more than five broodmares at a time at Coleswood, and when it comes time to find a new one, they are value shoppers.

"We have been pretty selective about the mares we have," Susan said. "The ones we have, we want to be very productive. We started slowly going to Keeneland and buying one here, one there. It's a constant assessment of the quality of the mares we have. If you go out there and try to buy a mare in foal to Gun Runner, you better be prepared to cough up some change. We're not in that league, so we just try to buy as best we can and make sure the conformation meets our standards, because if it doesn't, we're not buying the mare regardless of what the catalog page says."

In 2012, they bought the Pleasant Colony mare Capricha in foal to Ghostzapper, resulting in a colt named North Atlantic, who won 19 times and earned $719,454 in 55 starts over seven seasons, as well as a permanent place in Susan's heart.

"North Atlantic was a huge favorite," she said. "He had a ton of personality. He did not have a world of ability [winning only one listed stakes]. He didn't have the beautiful, fluid stride you want to see on a top-level horse, but he was as game as any horse that ever stepped on the racetrack. He did not care who he was running with. He ran against the toughest horses here time and time again. He just loved his job and had so much personality. Now he's retired at the Virginia Thoroughbred Project. He was definitely one of our very favorite horses."

Jeff has trained three horses who have earned more than $1 million: Researcher, Muad'dib and Coastal Mission. Researcher gave him his first graded stakes win, the Grade 3 Queens County at Aqueduct in 2009. Coastal Mission won the Grade 3 Forty Niner at Aqueduct in October, after taking the Parx Dirt Mile on Pennsylvania Derby Day. He also finished second in two graded stakes in 2024. As a homebred, his success has been especially satisfying.

"We're obviously breeding for a regional market," Susan said. "To have a horse of this quality off of a broodmare program that has five mares in it, it's not what you would expect, but we're just fortunate that it turned out that way. But we love the mare [Smart Crowd]. She had already produced Lewisfield [champion Maryland-bred sprinter in 2019], who was a very good horse that Jeff trained."

They bought Smart Crowd from Linda Zang, the breeder of Lewisfield, named for her late husband, Maryland trainer and longtime breeder Jim Lewis. Jim was in the Coast Guard, as was the Runcos' son, Jeremy, so when it came time to name

After a banner 2024 that included starts in six graded stakes, homebred Coastal Mission enjoys some well deserved time off at Coleswood Farm.

Jeff and Susan Runco visit with Coastal Mission's stakes-placed half-sister Sail On Breeze, a daughter of Street Boss who joined the Coleswood broodmare ranks in 2024. Smart Crowd, the dam of both, died in 2023. Her last foal, a 2-year-old colt by Unified, could make his racing debut this year. Below, Coastal Mission wins the Grade 3 Forty Niner Stakes at Aqueduct in October.

COGLIANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Lewisfield's full-brother, Coastal Mission seemed like a good choice.

Smart Crowd died from foaling complications at age 21 in 2023. Her foal, by Unified, just turned 2.

"He's a big, nice colt," Susan said. "He looks very much like Coastal Mission. Big, gray, leggy colt. He's going to be a really big horse. He looks so much like his brother. We just hope he runs half as well."

Between Jeremy and their older son, Robert Motch, Susan and Jeff have five grandchildren. Their business is 24/7/365, but they do manage to get away to go diving, with Grand Cayman a favorite destination.

"We have a lot of the same interests," Jeff said. "We both love horses. We both love diving. We're dog lovers. We have a lot in common. When I get home, there's always something to talk about."

Jeff is keenly aware of how important Susan is to their success, and he's not the only one.

"Most people know it," he said. "All my clients and the people around here, they know what Susan does. When we go to sales, they'll contact her as much or more than me because that's her area. She really researches pedigrees and is looking to try to buy the best quality horse and breed the best quality horses we can. And it's worked out pretty well." ■

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— Loose Rein —

BY VINNIE PERRONE

Home Run

TRAINER ALLEN FOUND WINS IN BASEBALL, RACING

A stable to build. A stable to manage. At a professional crossroads in his mid-30s, Harold "Hank" Allen looked to develop a roster of dirt and turf runners in the sport he knew well and treasured. Baseball.

Seven years a utility player in the big leagues, Allen retired with aims on a front-office or coaching position; team owner Bob Short had nudged that possibility before he turned the Washington Senators into the Texas Rangers. Allen had spent nearly five versatile seasons in Washington, built and kept a home in Upper Marlboro, Md., even after trades sent him to Milwaukee's Brewers and Chicago's White Sox. He retired after the 1973 season, a .241 career hitter who played every position save shortstop and pitcher, and approached the Senators' brass about that second career.

The reply, in composite: What second career? When Allen petitioned other franchises, one executive replied, "We have no jobs available now or in the future."

Years later, Allen referenced the snub with neither scowl nor grievance, which typified his smooth and even way of going whatever the crosswinds.

"Take a look – there's no place in baseball for Blacks when their playing days are over," Allen said. "Once I got that disappointment out of my system, I was able to explore other avenues."

One avenue led straight out of Wampum. There, on Pennsylvania's western edge, Coy Allen sought a way to fuse responsibility in his eight kids. So the trucking company manager transported to the family acreage the perfect vehicle: a horse.

Decades later, Dad's delivery would guide Hank's deliverance. The consummate team player denied a new position in baseball, Hank rediscovered horses and, with Northern Wolf, Island Champ, Sparrowvon and briefly Citidancer, eventually played hardball with racing's all-stars. After Hank Allen died last May at 83, tales of his on-track breakthroughs shared billing with his major-league feats.

However practical Coy Allen's objectives, Hank and younger brothers Richie and Ron found joy with horses beyond the toil. Teenage Richie saved $100 delivering newspapers with plans to buy a horse of his own until his mom scotched the notion. Well, delayed it.

Hank (1958) and Richie (1960) led Wampum High to state basketball titles and dazzled on the baseball diamond. The Philadelphia Phillies signed both as amateur free agents around 1960 – later Ron as well – and Hank earned an education degree from Youngstown State while playing minor-league ball, setting up offseason work as a schoolteacher.

Richie made the first big strides on the field and in the barn. In 1964, he played every game at third base for the Phillies, led the majors in runs and triples as National League Rookie of the Year and bought a Quarter Horse. Two years later, Hank became a September call-up for the Senators and batted .387 in nine games. In 1972, Ron finally reached the majors briefly but notably: His 14 plate appearances featured one hit, a homer.

By the time Hank retired from baseball in 1974, Richie had become known as Dick and moved to the Chicago White Sox amid his seventh all-star season in a Hall of Fame career. Dick Allen had expanded into Thoroughbreds by then, and he finally cajoled Hank into visiting his Arlington Park stable. There, Hank looked down the shedrow and saw his future.

An introduction to Nate Cantrell, then in his 90s and deemed the nation's oldest active trainer, tamped the footpath. Hank served as Cantrell's understudy for better than a year,

NEENA EWING COLLECTION / MARYLAND HORSE LIBRARY

got his trainer's license in 1976, soon set off for Maryland and opened shop at Bowie Race Course with a trusted foreman – brother Ron.

The Allen barn spanned two dozen, claimers mostly, when the Hank-owned filly Destry Again won a minor stakes at Keystone Race Track (now Parx) in 1982. Then came Island

"Hank had obviously fallen in love with the horse. He kept telling us Northern Wolf was special, and we wanted to believe him, but we were scratching our heads."

– Howard Hoffman, co-owner of Northern Wolf

Champ, whose improbable heroics cast Allen as a horse-training sage and served to broaden and upgrade his chiefly Maryland-bred stable.

The first horse bred by owner John Heil, Island Champ shone through star-crossed travels. A winner at 2, the Dancing Champ colt advanced at 3 despite persistent setbacks. A springtime virus cost him two months, a van-ride tumble three. He lost a month to respiratory infection and greeted 1984, his 4-year-old season, with cracked heels.

Nate Cantrell's words echoed: Pay attention to the little things. Know a horse's ways. Co-exist. "Once you can get into his mind," Cantrell told him, "you're on your way."

Island Champ told Allen he was ready despite the skepticism. A quarter crack barely healed, he led throughout Keystone's Germantown Stakes at 12-1 in his '84 debut. Six weeks later, he took Bowie's Native Dancer at 18-1 and followed with a nose victory in the Grade 3 John B. Campbell Handicap.

A year later, the John Alden-sired Sparrowvon left Allen's Bowie barn and won Pimlico's Federico Tesio Stakes, finished eighth in the Preakness-G1 and defeated Skip Trial, Eternal Prince, Roo Art, Little Bold John and I Am the Game as he went. He won title as champion Maryland-bred older male in 1986 and totaled six stakes scores over six seasons for Jacque Laskey and daughter Scotty Lawyer of Jacque-Scott Stable.

Sparrowvon raced to age 7, evincing Allen's emphasis on durability over precocity. Then came Northern Wolf.

Fun-loving psychiatrists Howard Hoffman, John Meeks and Allen Cahill – "the three cerebral guys," Allen called them – had observed in the typically measured trainer a strange euphoria over their dappled-gray homebred. Before Northern Wolf's 2-year-old debut in 1988, Hoffman said, "I was expecting Phar Lap."

Northern Wolf finished fifth that summer day at Pimlico, which did little to snuff Allen's blazing belief in the 2-year-old colt. When Allen proposed a follow-up in the Primer Stakes, the psychiatrists joked privately, then publicly, whether Allen might merit evaluation.

"Hank had obviously fallen in love with the horse," Hoffman later said. "He kept telling us Northern Wolf was special, and we wanted to believe him, but we were scratching our heads. We told Hank he might need our professional services before it was all over."

Northern Wolf won the Primer at 45-1 and had more surprises left. Typecast as a sprinter into his 3-year-old season, the colt proved otherwise in the nine-furlong Deputed Testamony, missing Pimlico's track record by two-fifths of a second. Allen shrugged at the notion this somehow proved a revelation: Northern Wolf's sire, Wolf Power, had won a Horse of the Year title in his native South Africa and set four course records in an 18-for-31 career steeped in two-turn gallantry. Wolf Power's first crop as a Kentucky stallion included Northern Wolf.

When Allen viewed the Deputed Testamony as a gateway to the Kentucky Derby-G1, nobody snickered and he became the first Black trainer in 78 years to have a runner in the classic. A forward factor throughout, Northern Wolf collared front-running fellow Maryland-bred Houston into the Churchill Downs homestretch, where Sunday Silence overtook them outside and zigzagged to victory. Northern Wolf proceeded gamely to finish sixth, not 4 lengths off the winner.

Allen assigned the colt's punchless Preakness to a respiratory infection that left him 10½ months unraced. As Northern Wolf resumed light training in February 1990, Allen unwrapped another jewel. Two years after their homebred Willa On the Move had won the Grade 1 Ashland for trainer Leon Blusiewicz, Marylanders Robert and Lorraine Quinichett sent her half-brother to Allen. Sired by Dixieland Band, Citidancer won his debut by 12 lengths; not a week later, California interests bought him for more than $500,000.

Other paydays loomed on strengthening gray legs. For Northern Wolf, a time to rest brought times to shine.

In June 1990, Northern Wolf finished 6 furlongs faster than any Laurel Park starter ever, winning the Duck Dance Handicap in 1:08⅕. Two months later, the first-ever Frank J.

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Hank Allen (right) and brother Ron prepare Northern Wolf for his Preakness run in 1989.

De Francis Memorial Dash enticed reigning national sprint champion and odds-on favorite Safely Kept, California speedster Sunny Blossom, Grade 1 winner Sewickley and Florida standout Glitterman. At $350,000 the nation's richest Thoroughbred sprint outside the Breeders' Cup, the Dash also attracted Northern Wolf, who brashly interrupted the front-running stretch duel between Safely Kept and Sunny Blossom and powered on to a 2½-length triumph in 1:09. In Pimlico's 120-year run, no horse had devoured 6 furlongs so quickly.

"I don't think it's as much about being the first" De Francis Dash winner, Allen said. "It's about the accomplishment and the journey."

The Breeders' Cup squarely in play, Northern Wolf breezed 5 furlongs at Belmont Park in :56⅗ – faster than the track record – but left with a sesamoid fracture that brought retirement.

Allen handled the setback with vintage grace, defending exercise rider Mike Kummer. "How do you determine what is too fast?" Allen asked. "Mike doesn't use a stick and doesn't ride him hard. We let [Northern Wolf] do what he wants to do. That's been the manner that we've worked this horse for some time. We didn't ask him specifically to go out there and have a blistering work."

Across 22 years as trainer, Allen found little to criticize and rarely dodged a question. When the mood was right, he'd even play verbal pepper, like the morning a reporter worked a Bowie trackside interview with free-wheeling trainer Eddie Gaudet. Allen walked past and advised, "Just put expletive deleted."

In a way, the compact zinger synopsized Allen's career as a Black trainer in a white sport, as a humble practitioner whose horses drew attention, as a horseman who dispatched 263 starters in his busiest year and made on oversized impact on racing in the Mid-Atlantic and beyond.

As he shepherded Northern Wolf to a Maryland-bred older-male championship and fashioned a stakes-winning lineup with Tulindas, Azarbaijani, She's a Champ, Caromine and Vet Jet, Allen maintained a presence on another field of interest. The Hank Allen Stable routinely had a team in the summer softball league at Pimlico, whose fence-less fields allowed outfielders to take position in distant precincts when

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A former major-leaguer, Hank Allen clouts a big hit in Pimlico's summer softball league.

Allen took the batter's box. Six feet tall and coiled but otherwise unassuming in sneakers, jeans, a tee-shirt and driving cap, he'd launch moonshots to left field that threatened orbit.

In the late 1990s, amid a downward shift in clientele, Allen saw the old ballfield in a new light. Enlightened front offices more inclusive since he'd left the game 45 years earlier, Allen became a scout for the Milwaukee Brewers before his 60th birthday and later for the Houston Astros.

He served as Astros scout when he got a call from then-New Mexico Racing Commission chairman Sam Bregman, who said his teenage son was using Albuquerque ballfields as a private playground and deserved a look. Allen made the trip, and the Astros made the player, Alex Bregman, the second pick in the 2015 amateur draft.

Hank stood "an outstanding man and human being" in Alex's eyes, and their friendship deepened despite a 54-year age difference. In 2018, the year after Bregman homered twice in Houston's first World Series conquest, the Astros made a road trip to Baltimore. Bregman invited Allen to Oriole Park at Camden Yards for a visit, welcomed him, extended a small jewelry box. Allen accepted it with a big, calloused, grateful hand, opened the case and found a World Series ring.

"It's yours," said Bregman, now a Thoroughbred owner. "You earned it."

Hank Allen tried it on, amazed once more how something unexpected could fit so well. ■

Born in 1940, Harold A. "Hank" Allen died May 29, 2024. He was 83. He graduated from Pennsylvania's Wampum High in 1958 and attended Baldwin-Wallace and Youngstown State University. He played professional baseball with the Philadelphia Phillies, Washington Senators, Milwaukee Brewers and Chicago White Sox organizations. Survivors include his son and daughter, Charles Richard Allen of Upper Marlboro, Md., and Robin Cox of Ashburn, Va.; brother, Ronald F. Allen, of Youngstown; eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. In addition to his parents Coy and Era Allan, Hank was preceded in death by sisters Dorothy Etta Daniels, Iona Bernard, Helen Elizabeth Craine, and Sarah Lee Eady, and three brothers, Coy Craine Allen, Caesar W. Craine, and Richard "Dick" Allen, the latter to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Class of 2025.

On the racetrack, trainer Hank Allen's horses won 286 races and earned $3,641,407, topped by Northern Wolf's $461,107.

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Black Pioneers played important roles in racing

Keeneland exhibit comes to Maryland Horse Library

By Cindy Deubler

A groundbreaking exhibit created by the Keeneland Library has made its way to the Maryland Horse Library and Education Center. *The Heart Of The Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers,* about the lives and contributions of Black horsemen and women from enslavement to today, will be on display in Maryland Feb. 1-28.

The Keeneland Library launched the exhibit in 2023 in Lexington, Ky., and created a traveling version that fall. Roda Ferraro, director of the Keeneland Library and the exhibit's curator, will be on hand at the MHLEC Saturday, Feb. 1 for a one-hour discussion detailing its creation, importance and impact.

"My single biggest hope for folks engaging with the exhibit is to get a glimpse of the depth and breadth of African American contributions over time across all facets of racing and breeding," said Ferraro.

Nine 37-inch by 91-inch double-sided panels tell stories about the lives and careers of 100 African American horsemen and women from the mid-1800s to the present. Often overlooked, they are among the individuals who forged their way in Kentucky and beyond – from the era of slavery to the present – to make racing what it is. One-of-a-kind photographs from the Keeneland Library collections capture moments across varied careers, while biographical vignettes honor lasting legacies.

The display has spurred many who have seen it to share their stories.

"Speaking with people locally or elsewhere, I have heard many powerful stories of people's connections to those featured in the exhibit or recollections of their own varied work in the industry," said Ferraro. "Some lasting impacts of those conversations are new collections in the library from people who, inspired by the exhibit, loan their family's scrapbooks and photographs to the library for digitization. We then return those precious resources back to the families, while future researchers have access to enriched collections spotlighting un- or under-told stories."

The project, on a wish list of exhibit topics for nearly eight years, came together relatively quickly once Ferraro had the time to dedicate to it.

"The exhibit's research, curation and writing took me roughly two months, and graphic design and production were wrapped within six weeks," Ferraro said.

That tight development window was possible because nearly all the research material was in the Keeneland Library's collections.

"I did seek a few loans and assets from other public and private collections, but the library has been connecting the public and industry to those information and image resources for several decades, so they were very familiar to me," Ferraro said. "I did have to dig deeper for the never-before-published photos and stories."

The original exhibit displayed at Keeneland also featured artwork, artifacts and video interviews. The latter, a series of 10 created by the Keeneland Library's Ed Brown Society associate, Timothy Campbell, can be found on YouTube under "The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers."

The traveling exhibit, while not as extensive and complex, has been a hit.

"A portion of the exhibit was always designed to travel," said Ferraro. "First to Kentucky hosting sites, then more broadly across the country. Since we began to travel with it in

The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers **was featured at the Keeneland Library in 2023.**

Keeneland Library Collection (2)

Clem Brooks with Nashua at Spendthrift.

Isaac Burns Murphy (center) in 1890.

Keeneland Library Collection

Trainer Oscar Dishman Jr. (right) and Robert Turner with Dust Wind, circa 1965.

Keeneland Library Hemment Collection

Groom with future Hall of Famer Sysonby (left) in 1905.

Keeneland Library McClure Collection

John Buckner with Man o' War, circa 1925.

Trainer Byron McClelland's staff, circa 1895.

Keeneland Library Hemment Collection (2)

Willie Simms after Ben Brush's 1897 Suburban Handicap win.

fall 2023, the exhibit has freely reached more than 90,000 people at 16 different hosting sites. An additional 8,500 youth and adults took part in free exhibit educational programs I delivered in schools, public libraries, universities and community centers.

"From big sites that reach thousands to smaller community centers, it is so gratifying to watch people of all ages who know nothing about the industry and industry veterans alike taking in the exhibit's content and asking great, tough questions."

A visit to Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta for the Black Sports Business Symposium in May 2024 was memorable.

"Getting into the stadium, unloading, and installing on my own was quite the adventure, but that was an impactful few days with young athletes getting their first glimpses into racing's past and present," Ferraro said. "It is now wrapping its time with the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum, and it has been a joy to work with the amazing Lisa Hall hosting there in Aiken."

Ferraro has also started conversations with counterparts and friends in Deauville about a trip to France. "I would love to get it there with the buildout of supplemental educational assets in French."

A year ago, the documentary *The Legacy of Black Horsemen* was shown at the Maryland library. Among those interviewed was Ferraro. The hour-long historical documentary, funded in part by Kentucky Educational Television's endowment for Kentucky productions, tells stories of Black jockeys, trainers, owners, grooms and exercise riders in the 1800s whose contributions helped lay the foundation for the Thoroughbred industry. The Keeneland exhibit was a integral part of the production.

The library supplied the documentary's production crew with research, most of the film's still images, interview locations, as well as providing a cameo or two.

"Working with KET, the PBS affiliate that released the documentary, is always a great experience," said Ferraro. "I am working with the same crew now on a documentary for Lexington's 250th anniversary this year." ❧

Great Notion, Golden Lad achieve sire milestones

Northview Stallion Station sires Great Notion and Golden Lad ended 2024 as the Mid-Atlantic's leading general sire and juvenile sire respectively, while both hit career milestones.

For the first time in his 17-year stud career, Great Notion surpassed $6 million in progeny earnings in one year. The only other Maryland stallion to hit that mark was Northview's Not For Love in 2008 and 2009.

Great Notion had 77 winners from 129 starters in 2024, and total earnings of $6,128,141, an average per runner of $47,505. He led the region by stakes winners with eight, topped by graded winners Coastal Mission and Future Is Now.

It was Great Notion's seventh consecutive year as Maryland's general sires leader.

Golden Lad emerged as the region's top 2-year-old sire when daughter Caprice earned $60,000 with her Gin Talking Stakes score Dec. 28. It was her third consecutive $100,000 Laurel stakes win, and her second in December. With $331,250 earned during a 6-for-7 season, Caprice accounted for more than half of Golden Lad's $601,198 in progeny earnings.

It was the second consecutive year (among sires with Maryland-sired crops) that Golden Lad finished atop Maryland's juvenile sires list and third time in six years. The last to take the title in consecutive years was Not For Love in 2012 and 2013.

Finishing less than $50,000 back on the juvenile sire rankings (with $551,420) was Anchor and Hope Farm's Holy Boss. Country Life Farm's Mosler also exceeded the half-million-dollar mark, his 15 runners accruing $527,005.

Rounding out the top five were Atlanta Hall Farm's Cupid ($482,737) and Northview's Uncle Lino ($475,478). Great Notion led all juvenile sires by winners, with 13 from 18 starters (72 percent). ❧

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UPCOMING

Maryland Horse Library Events

27 JAN 5:00 PM

Film Showing: Seattle Slew

The 2001 film is part of ESPN's Sports Century series and features archival footage of the 1977 Triple Crown winner along with interviews, and commentary by the horse's connections and the turf reporters who covered his career. Among those telling the story of racing's "ugly duckling" are Slew's trainer Billy Turner, who early in the horse's training stabled him in Maryland at Monkton's Andor Farm. Others appearing are racing writers Joe Kelly, Bill Nack and Ed Bowen.

1 FEB 2:00 PM

MHLEC Opening of Keeneland Library's Traveling Exhibit

Keeneland Library Director and Exhibit Curator Roda Ferraro presents the traveling exhibit, "The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers." In a one-hour discussion, she details its creation, importance, and impact to open the exhibit's month-long stay at the Library.

24 FEB 4:00 PM

History and Impact of the Bill Pickett Rodeo

D/V Area Event Coordinator Greg Freeman introduces the Bill Pickett Rodeo, a 41-year-old traveling rodeo celebrating and honoring black cowboys and cowgirls. The rodeo is named for famed Black cowboy Willie "Bill" Pickett, who invented the discipline "bulldogging," now known as steer wrestling.

24 MAR 5:00 PM

Film Showing: Hoof Dreams

This ninety-minute documentary by HBO filmmaker Jessie Deeter follows three female equestrians in their quest to become the first females to win individual eventing Olympic gold. The film was created over a period of six years and follows individual Olympic gold medalist Julia Krajewski (GER), Kentucky CCI5* winner Tamie Smith (USA) and 2016 Olympian and Central American Games gold medalist Lauren Billys Shady (PUR).

28 APR 4:00 PM

Author Talk: Eliza McGraw

Astride: Horses, Women, and a Partnership that Shaped America

Historian Eliza McGraw takes a different path in her new book, Astride: Horses, Women, and a Partnership that Shaped America. The author of Here Comes Exterminator weaves together stories of women who pioneered in the worlds of Thoroughbred breeding, the circus, horse rescue, cattle ranching, race riding and more in a time when women were determined to prove they could hold their own in any equine related activity. Richly illustrated with period photographs, Astride demonstrates that even small changes can advance the fight for progress.

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Maryland Fund Stakes Recaps

Jim McCue

Spencerian

Politely Stakes

$75,000-guaranteed, 6 fur., registered Maryland-bred or sired fillies and mares, 3 & up. Laurel Park, Dec. 21.

Dk.b./br.m., 2020, Irish War Cry—Cursive, by Straight Talking. Bred by Franklin G. Smith Sr.; owned by Larry E. Rabold; trained by Hugh I. McMahon. Foaled at Green Mount Farm, Reisterstown, Md.

		Lifetime		
starts	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*earnings*
17	6 (1)	1	2 (1)	$215,746
				(through Dec. 21)

2024: 1st $75,000 **Politely S**, 6 fur., registered Md.-bred or sired fillies and mares, 3 & up, Laurel, Dec. 21; 3rd **Maryland Million Distaff S**.

Climbing the ladder her past two seasons, Larry Rabold's Spencerian became a stakes winner in her final start of 2024 with a 2-length victory in the $75,000 Politely Stakes for Maryland-bred or -sired fillies and mares at Laurel Park Dec. 21.

With Victor Carrasco up, Spencerian went off the 3-1 third choice in the field of eight thanks to a record of three wins (by a combined 22½ lengths) and two thirds in her five prior starts, including a third in the Maryland Million Distaff in October.

The now 5-year-old daughter of Irish War Cry trained by Hugh McMahon showed speed during the streak, and when the field broke for the Politely, she hustled out of the gate to a forward position.

Tracking about a length off the pace of longshot Talk to the Judge as she posted fractions of :22.94, :46.49 and :59.30, Spencerian looked to be all-out as she headed into the turn. Kept to her task, the dark bay found a wide lane to the inside and kicked in. She charged to the front and galloped home by daylight in 1:12.18 for 6 furlongs.

Spencerian won at 2 for her breeder, Franklin G. Smith Sr., when she captured a 7-furlong maiden special weight by 6 lengths in her second start at Laurel in July 2022. Then she disappeared.

Her first start at 3 came in May in allowance company at Charles Town where she finished off the board. Risked for a $50,000 tag next out at Laurel, she finished off the board, and started to drop. She ran for $25,000, was taken for $16,000 in July, and was dropped in for that price again at Timonium that September, where Rabold made the claim. The remainder of 2023 saw her risked three more times, but she remained in the McMahon barn.

Off from October 2023 until August 2024, Spencerian returned to win by 5 lengths for a $30,000 tag. She ran in stakes and allowances in her five races since while earning $144,075 in 2024.

Spencerian is the second foal, and second winner, out of Smith's homebred mare Cursive, a daughter of the Dixieland Band stallion Straight Talking. Cursive raced four years, made 30 starts, won or placed 14 times, and earned $184,050. Spencerian improved her career earnings to $215,746, with six wins and three placings from 17 starts. ❧

Jim McCue

Celtic Contender

Howard and Sondra Bender Memorial Stakes

$75,000-guaranteed, 7 fur., registered Maryland-bred or sired, 3 & up. Laurel Park, Dec. 21.

Ch.c., 2021, Irish War Cry—Celtic Katie, by Posse. Bred by Fred T. Lewis DVM; owned by Lewis Family Racing Stable; trained by Hamilton A. Smith. Foaled at Lewis Family Racing Stable, Clarksville, Md.

		Lifetime		
starts	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*earnings*
12	5 (2)	1 (1)	3 (2)	$234,805
				(through Dec. 21)

2024: 1st $100,000 **Maryland Million Sprint S**, 6 fur., 3 & up, sired by eligible Md. stallions, Laurel, Oct. 12; $75,000 **Howard and Sondra Bender Memorial S**, 7 fur., registered Md.-bred or sired, 3 & up, Laurel, Dec. 21; 2nd **City of Laurel S**; 3rd **Concern S, Star de Naskra S**.

Lewis Family Racing Stable homebred Celtic Contender concluded a stellar 3-year-old campaign when registering a 1½-length victory over older runners in the $75,000 Howard and Sondra Bender Memorial for Maryland-bred or -sired runners at Laurel Park Dec. 21.

The 6-5 favorite in the field of seven found himself on the lead through an opening quarter in :23.26 but was joined to his inside by longshot Freeze the Fire, who was eager to take over through a half in :46.62. Celtic Contender's regular rider, Victor Carrasco, had a confident hold as the two leaders rounded the far turn while lengths ahead.

Circle P moved up to join the top two into the stretch. When Freeze the Fire backed out, it turned into a duel between Celtic Contender along the rail and Circle P to his outside as they raced to the wire. Celtic Contender pulled away late, while covering 7 furlongs in 1:24.48.

Unraced at 2, Celtic Contender recorded his fifth win from 12 starts and boosted his earnings to $234,805. Trained by Hamilton Smith, he launched his career in January and raced nearly once a month (he missed May but ran twice in June). In his last four starts, he scored three times, including the Maryland Million Sprint Oct. 12 over older horses, and finished second in the City of Laurel Stakes against open company in November. He crossed the finish line first in the Star de Naskra in June but was placed third for interference.

The first of two offspring by former Northview Stallion Station sire Irish War Cry to win stakes on the card, Celtic Contender is out of Celtic Katie, a stakes-winning homebred for late veterinarian Dr. Fred Lewis. Celtic Katie (by Posse) is the first foal out of the Not For Love mare Katie's Love, a stakes winner herself of $248,500 purchased by Lewis as a yearling for $60,000 at the 2003 Fasig-Tipton Midlantic fall yearling sale.

A half-sister to the dam of Eclipse Award winner Declan's Moon, Katie's Love produced six winners from seven foals to race and the earners of more than $600,000.

Her only stakes horse, Celtic Katie has had two stakes performers from four starters. The other is Hunter Joe (by Palace Malice), a seven-time winner of $268,690, Hunter Joe was one of two winners for Celtic Katie on the 2024 Maryland Million Day card (he won the turf starter handicap). In his start prior, he ran second in the Find Stakes on the turf.

Following Lewis' death at age 95 in March 2022, his family sold the majority of the Katie's Love-line offspring, including Celtic Katie. She was purchased by Tom Bowman for $6,000, having not been mated that year after delivering an Irish War Cry colt. The mare had a Blofeld filly last March and was returned to the same sire for this year. ❧

Maryland Fund Report

Bonuses paid for races run
in October 2024 at Maryland tracks

Breeder bonuses

Includes the additional 10 percent Maryland-sired bonus for winners of maiden races, initiated Jan. 1 during the 2022 Laurel winter meet. That bonus is reflected in the second figure earned for the race.

Anchor and Hope Farm Inc.—Sacred Thunder: Oct. 12, 2nd race, $1,500.

Anchor and Hope Farm Inc. and Copper Penny Stables—Angel Art: Oct. 10, 6th race, $832.50.

Jose D. Antao—Sweet Summer Love: Oct. 17, 1st race, $585.

Lynn A. Ashby and William Gotwals—Re Markably: Oct. 12, 2nd race, $3,000.

Victor Bahna Jr.—Flinny Tin Tin: Oct. 6, 2nd race, $2,970.

Sharon Banford—Red Hat Hanna: Oct. 27, 8th race, $6,480.

Barak Farm—Fivecommatwo: Oct. 12, 1st race, $750. Hateful: Oct. 18, 2nd race, $2,970. Kitty's Son: Oct. 26, 2nd race, $1,057.50. Lady Mosler: Oct. 31, 3rd race, $1,170. Safe Trust: Oct. 12, 6th race, $1,500. ($7,447.50)

Barak Farm and Dinos Thoroughbreds LLC—Isabella's Glory: Oct. 12, 4th race, $1,200. Shkhara Fire: Oct. 12, 6th race, $8,250. Skip Thru Da Fire: Oct. 3, 3rd race, $2,970; Oct. 24, 10th race, $2,970. Trash Talkin Larry: Oct. 19, 2nd race, $540; Oct. 27, 3rd race, $450. ($16,380)

Barak Farm and Sharon Dodgen—Curl N Rod: Oct. 11, 6th race, $4,455/$1,485 ($5,940)

Barlar LLC—Call Me Andy: Oct. 13, 7th race, $2,160.

William Bayne and Super C Racing—Mutt Dillin: Oct. 17, 4th race, $1,485.

BB Horses—Royal Seamstress: Oct. 5, 2nd race, $1,305.

Patricia Beck and Richard C. Beck—Daily Planet: Oct. 31, 8th race, $652.50.

Bell Gable Stable—Sir Chance a Lot: Oct. 24, 6th race, $495.

Big Lick Farm and Erin Atkiss—Knockanara: Oct. 11, 7th race, $1,057.50.

James A. Blackwell—Tom Hagen: Oct. 19, 3rd race, $3,240.

Richard F. Blue Jr.—The Last Scip: Oct. 12, 5th race, $1,500; Oct. 26, 9th race, $2,160. ($3,660)

Charles Bonuccelli—Roll On Jesse: Oct. 5, 7th race, $2,115.

Matthew Bright—Brighty: Oct. 31, 6th race, $585.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman—Blue Kingdom: Oct. 31, 7th race, $1,080. Old Bay: Oct. 11, 8th race, $6,480. Quiet Dancer: Oct. 13, 2nd race, $2,970; Oct. 13, 2nd race, $990. ($11,520)

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman and Dr. Brooke Bowman—Feelin So Lucky: Oct. 4, 2nd race, $4,455; Oct. 17, 6th race, $1,485. ($5,940)

Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman, Quin Bowman and Rebecca Davis—Clubman: Oct. 12, 12th race, $3,300.

Bowman and Higgins Stable—Likeagentleman: Oct. 10, 3rd race, $495.

Bowman and Higgins Stable and Cary Frommer—Monday Morning Qb: Oct. 11, 2nd race, $1,665.

Wes Carter—Had to Have Him: Oct. 12, 9th race, $1,500.

Susan S. Cooney—Meliponini Bee: Oct. 31, 1st race, $877.50.

Country Life Farm and Fifteen Moons LLC—Ariel Moon: Oct. 19, 1st race, $1,170.

Country Life Farm and Fleet and Fancy LLC—Next Girl: Oct. 12, 1st race, $4,125.

Country Life Farm and Huron Racing Ventures, LLC—Sir Mick: Oct. 24, 2nd race, $3,510.

Country Life Farm and Imagistic Broodmare II LLC—Sweet Talia: Oct. 4, 5th race, $382.50.

Country Life Farm and Moon Vision Broodmare LLC—Creed's Vision: Oct. 18, 6th race, $1,845.

Country Life Farm and Moonlit Malibu LLC—Esperannna: Oct. 18, 1st race, $540.

Country Life Farm and Rock Sapphire LLC—Put a Rock On It: Oct. 31, 3rd race, $3,510.

Country Life Farm and Rue de Rivoli LLC—Next Episode: Oct. 12, 3rd race, $1,500.

Country Life Farm and Watrugonnadorosie LLC—Hanksdiviningrod: Oct. 26, 9th race, $6,480.

CRK Stable LLC—Excellorator: Oct. 18, 8th race, $7,560.

Crystal Park Stables Inc.—Brilliant Ice: Oct. 12, 11th race, $8,250.

Dark Hollow Farm—Circle Home: Oct. 12, 3rd race, $8,250. It's a Shore Thing: Oct. 13, 6th race, $5,535. Stormy Hollow: Oct. 10, 1st race, $990. Whiskeyinthejaro: Oct. 11, 5th race, $922.50. ($15,697.50)

Dark Hollow Farm, D. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. David Schwaber et al—Daze: Oct. 5, 8th race, $6,615.

John C. Davison—War Master: Oct. 31, 7th race, $6,480.

Designated Hitters Racing—Omar Comin: Oct. 5, 4th race, $1,170.

David M. DiPietro—One Way Traffic: Oct. 6, 1st race, $1,170; Oct. 27, 1st race, $3,510. ($4,680)

Hassan Elamri—Golden Can: Oct. 20, 1st race, $1,080.

Annette Eubanks and Daniel Eubanks—Band Camp: Oct. 12, 8th race, $3,000. Stormy Irish Lass: Oct. 18, 2nd race, $495. ($3,495)

Steve R. Ferguson—Lady Charlotte: Oct. 24, 10th race, $495.

Finale Farm and Mr. and Mrs. David Moose—Nick's Notion: Oct. 4, 3rd race, $6,345/$2,115. ($8,460)

Fitzhugh LLC—Matta: Oct. 24, 5th race, $1,080.

Robert J. Gerczak—Sultry Sally H: Oct. 4, 8th race, $1,102.50.

Greenspring Mares LLC and Collected Syndicate—Work for Peace: Oct. 24, 6th race, $2,970.

GreenMount Farm and Tiznow Syndicate—Molly of Stratford: Oct. 4, 9th race, $2,970.

Michael J. Harrison DVM—Rylnnslookinglucky: Oct. 11, 6th race, $1,485.

Harry Kassap LLC—Magical Mondays: Oct. 25, 6th race, $2,115.

Hillwood Stable LLC—Twist 'n Twirl: Oct. 12, 5th race, $750.

Holly House Farm—Summer Odds: Oct. 11, 8th race, $2,160.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Holt and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Palumbo—Chat Blanc: Oct. 26, 1st race, $1,170.

Kyle Horlacher—Crabs N Beer: Oct. 12, 7th race, $1,500.

Kyle M. Horlacher and Scott Clarke—Dirty Gold: Oct. 24, 1st race, $742.50.

Horseshoe Valley Equine Center LLC—Any Fools Gold: Oct. 13, 1st race, $1,170; Oct. 27, 2nd race, $1,485. ($2,655)

Housatonic Bloodstock—Drink Deeply: Oct. 3, 4th race, $2,115.

Catherine R. Jager—Boys Go to Jupiter: Oct. 3, 4th race, $1,057.50.

Jagger Inc.—Kick Startness: Oct. 5, 4th race, $3,510; Oct. 26, 4th race, $1,170. Paco the Taco Man: Oct. 12, 12th race, $1,200. ($5,880)

Jagger Inc. and Super C Racing Inc.—Derbyness: Oct. 3, 8th race, $5,535; Oct. 31, 7th race, $2,160. ($7,695)

Jayne Johnson and Mike Tomlinson—Bajan Boy: Oct. 26, 6th race, $495.

R. Larry Johnson—Clouds of White: Oct. 18, 1st race, $3,240. Energy Efficient: Oct. 3, 5th race, $832.50. Mariano: Oct. 10, 2nd race, $3,510. Sky's Not Falling: Oct. 12, 7th race, $3,000. Waittilmidnitehour: Oct. 10, 4th race, $3,510. Zip Line to Heaven: Oct. 24, 5th race, $540. ($14,632.50)

Hope Haskell Jones—Moon Cache: Oct. 11, 4th race, $5,535/$1,845. ($7,380)

Kasey K Racing Stable—Lady Sriracha: Oct. 24, 4th race, $922.50.

Timothy L. Keefe—Watch Me Disappear: Oct. 25, 4th race, $1,102.50.

Dr. Megan Kerford DVM and Justin J. Nixon—Sheilahs Warcloud: Oct. 12, 10th race, $3,000.

Estate of Gordon Keys—Grateful Bred: Oct. 19, 7th race, $1,192.50.

Owen Kiernan—Ade: Oct. 25, 3rd race, $1,170.

Lady Olivia at North Cliff LLC—Buckin' Dreamer: Oct. 5, 1st race, $922.50; Oct. 13, 4th race, $4,455. ($5,377.50)

Carl Lanier—Freeze the Fire: Oct. 12, 8th race, $1,500. Mosler Time: Oct. 12, 11th race, $3,000. ($4,500)

Leaf Stable—Laddie Dance: Oct. 17, 5th race, $3,510.

Estate of Fred T. Lewis Sr. DVM—Celtic Contender: Oct. 12, 8th race, $8,250.

Lewis Family Racing Stable—Hunter Joe: Oct. 12, 5th race, $4,125.

James J. Loures—Hyteck Prince: Oct. 18, 9th race, $1,485.

Kenneth F. Lowe Jr.—Ifeelbadforyouson: Oct. 6, 8th race, $990.

Make My Day Stable—Agent Kelly: Oct. 11, 9th race, $585.

Sue Ann Mancilla and Susan Scheffres—Diamond Sue: Oct. 24, 4th race, $5,535/$1,845. ($7,380)

Marathon Farm Inc.—Circle P: Oct. 17, 8th race, $1,192.50.

Charles C.D. McGill—Lucky Prince: Oct. 10, 7th race, $585.

William Meister and Julie Arbogast—Peace Out: Oct. 4, 9th race, $495.

Ann Warfield Merryman and Richard F. Blue Jr.—Gift of Gab: Oct. 10, 6th race, $4,995; Oct. 20, 5th race, $1,192.50. ($6,187.50)

Mezza Luna Farm LLC—In the Dance: Oct. 12, 12th race, $600; Oct. 27, 7th race, $3,915. ($4,515)

Murmur Farm—Bondiva: Oct. 11, 8th race, $1,080.

Nancy Lee Farms—Margaret P: Oct. 18, 3rd race, $1,170. Police Woman: Oct. 27, 2nd race, $4,455. ($5,625)

Northwoods Stable—Mission North: Oct. 18, 5th race, $6,615.

No Guts No Glory Farm—Bad Boy Blaze: Oct. 3, 1st race, $2,970/$990. Banditsgoldenchild: Oct. 5, 6th race, $4,455. Do It for Michael: Oct. 12, 2nd race, $8,250. Dream River: Oct. 19, 6th race, $495. ($17,160)

Clarke Ohrstrom—Dead Sexy: Oct. 3, 2nd race, $5,535/$1,845. Granuaile: Oct. 11, 1st race, $742.50. Prestige Worldwide: Oct. 18, 6th race, $922.50. ($9,045)

David W. Palmer—Designer: Oct. 13, 1st race, $3,510. Preparefortakeoff: Oct. 4, 8th race, $2,205 ($5,715)

Charles V. Parker—Mose Perfect: Oct. 3, 5th race, $1,665; Oct. 24, 8th race, $4,995. ($6,660)

Ronald Harris Parker—Malibu Hooch: Oct. 12, 6th race, $3,000.

A. Leonard Pineau—Sullivan Street: Oct. 31, 5th race, $652.50.

Joel Politi—Biscuitwiththeboss: Oct. 26, 7th race, $6,615. Bosserati: Oct. 12, 9th race, $8,250. Jolly Boss: Oct. 20, 9th race, $5,535. Nola Boss: Oct. 6, 3rd race, $1,057.50. ($21,457.50)

Vivian E. Rall—Great Idea: Oct. 12, 9th race, $3,000.

Valter J. Ramos—Bernie the Star: Oct. 31, 2nd race, $1,057.50. Ready for Magic: Oct. 24, 7th race, $1,057.50. ($2,115)

Jay A. Reese—Sinetic: Oct. 27, 6th race, $6,345.

Randy Ridgely—Wickeddivine: Oct. 17, 4th race, $742.50.

Rolling Meadows Farm—Bond's Belle: Oct. 27, 5th race, $495.

Timothy J. Rooney—B Determined: Oct. 25, 2nd race, $1,080. Stoney: Oct. 6, 4th race, $6,345. ($7,425)

Alexandro Rubim-Dias—Over My Cents: Oct. 13, 6th race, $1,845.

Shamrock Farm—Barbadian Runner: Oct. 25, 8th race, $1,102.50. Sue Loves Barbados: Oct. 13, 7th race, $1,080. ($2,182.50)

Janice Sinatra—Daredavite: Oct. 4, 7th race, $765; Oct. 25, 1st race, $382.50. ($1,147.50)

Franklin G. Smith Sr.—Looking for Water: Oct. 6, 2nd race, $990; Oct. 26, 10th race, $495. Spencerian: Oct. 3, 7th race, $6,615; Oct. 12, 10th race, $1,500. ($9,600)

South Branch Equine LLC—Sharmin: Oct. 19, 1st race, $3,510/ $1,170. ($4,680)

James B. Steele Jr.—Divining Smile: Oct. 19, 9th race, $495.

Strongline Thoroughbreds LLC—Pipi N Mimi: Oct. 3, 1st race, $495.

Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds LLC—Addy's Laddy T N T: Oct. 27, 3rd race, $2,700. Alla Breve: Oct. 20, 5th race, $7,155. Conquerthosewecan: Oct. 4, 3rd race, $2,115. Easy Action: Oct. 3, 6th race, $2,385. First to Arrive: Oct. 25, 9th race, $990. Lovely Charm: Oct. 27, 8th race, $1,080. Sweet Honey Bee: Oct. 13, 2nd race, $990. Whiteknuckleflyer: Oct. 6, 5th race, $1,305; Oct. 20, 1st race, $3,240. ($21,960)

Sycamore Hall Thoroughbreds LLC and Ellen Charles—Closertotheheart: Oct. 4, 9th race, $990.

The Elkstone Group LLC—Cap Com: Oct. 18, 4th race, $1,102.50. Cover the Spread: Oct. 12, 1st race, $1,500; Oct. 27, 9th race, $5,535. Lifelovenlaughter: Oct. 19, 5th race, $2,385. Oncourtcommentator: Oct. 27, 8th race, $2,160. Solving Progress: Oct. 13, 3rd race, $3,510. Stewball: Oct. 27, 6th race, $2,115. ($18,307.50)

Thornmar Farm LLC—Fear Nothing: Oct. 25, 5th race, $1,170. Little Bit Risky: Oct. 4, 6th race, $1,102.50. Must Be Love: Oct. 26, 9th race, $1,080. Take a Hint: Oct. 17, 8th race, $2,385. Tall Order: Oct. 13, 7th race, $6,480. Up in Flames: Oct. 3, 1st race, $990; Oct. 24, 6th race, $990. Who Says So: Oct. 18, 6th race, $5,535/$1,845. ($21,577.50)

Thornmar Farm and Tim Keefe—Too Many Kisses: Oct. 6, 7th race, $1,102.50.

2500 Determined Holdings—Daring Venture: Oct. 6, 3rd race, $2,115. Determind Princess: Oct. 27, 9th race, $922.50. Determined Blue: Oct. 12, 4th race, $600. Rye Diggitydog: Oct. 27, 4th race, $1,170. ($4,807.50)

Two Legends Farm—Devil Pays in Gold: Oct. 12, 4th race, $3,300.

Katharine Merryman Voss—Joyful Kitten: Oct. 27, 5th race, $2,970/$990. ($3,960)

Maureen Wade—Buoyant: Oct. 24, 2nd race, $1,170.

Susan Wantz—Gatto Be Proud: Oct. 18, 9th race, $742.50. On a Proud Note: Oct. 11, 6th race, $742.50. ($1,485)

Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC, Larry Davis, Greenspring Mares LLC, Clarence Diehl and Connie Black—Institution: Oct. 25, 3rd race, $585.

Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC and Greenspring Mares LLC—Boujee Bubblez: Oct. 13, 6th race, $922.50.

Dr. and Mrs. Bruce C. Wells—Running River: Oct. 4, 7th race, $382.50.

Winding Creek Farm—Bruder: Oct. 17, 2nd race, $990.

Stallion bonuses

ALLIANCE (Agent Kelly: Oct. 11, 9th race, $195): Lawrence Karp.

BALTIMORE BOB (Sultry Sally H: Oct. 4, 8th race, $367.50): Robert Gerczak.

BANDBOX (Band Camp: Oct. 12, 8th race, $1,000. Paco the Taco Man: Oct. 12, 12th race, $400. Take a Hint: Oct. 17, 8th race, $795): Northview Stallion Station Inc.—$2,195.

BARBADOS (Bajan Boy: Oct. 26, 6th race, $165. Barbadian Runner: Oct. 25, 8th race, $367.50. Hateful: Oct. 18, 2nd race, $990. Sue Loves Barbados: Oct. 13, 7th race, $360): Shamrock Farm—$1,882.50.

BLOFELD (Bond's Belle: Oct. 27, 5th race, $165. Bondiva: Oct. 11, 8th race, $360. Chat Blanc: Oct. 26, 1st race, $390. Crabs N Beer: Oct. 12, 7th race, $500): Blofeld Syndicate—$1,415.

BOURBON COURAGE (Malibu Hooch: Oct. 12, 6th race, $1,000): Bourbon Courage Syndicate.

CUBA (Diamond Sue: Oct. 24, 4th race, $1,845): J&S Stables LLC.

DESPITE THE ODDS (Summer Odds: Oct. 11, 8th race, $720): R. Larry Johnson.

DIVINING ROD (Curl N Rod: Oct. 11, 6th race, $1,485. Divining Smile: Oct. 19, 9th race, $165. Fear Nothing: Oct. 25, 5th race, $390. Hanksdiviningrod: Oct. 26, 9th race, $2,160. Looking for Water: Oct. 6, 2nd race, $330; Oct. 26, 10th race, $165. Mutt Dillin: Oct. 17, 4th race, $495. Next Girl: Oct. 12, 1st race, $1,375. Sweet Talia: Oct. 4, 5th race, $127.50. Wickeddivine: Oct. 17, 4th race, $247.50): Divining Rod Syndicate—$6,940.

ECLIPTICALSPRALINE (Boys Go to Jupiter: Oct. 3, 4th race, $352.50): Maria M. Haire.

EDITORIAL (Daily Planet: Oct. 31, 8th race, $217.50): Climax Stallions LLC.

FIRST MONDAYS (Blue Kingdom: Oct. 31, 7th race, $360. Magical Mondays: Oct. 25, 6th race, $705. Pipi N Mimi: Oct. 3, 1st race, $165): First Mondays Partnership—$1,230.

FORCE THE PASS (Had to Have Him: Oct. 12, 9th race, $500. One Way Traffic: Oct. 6, 1st race, $390; Oct. 27, 1st race, $1,170): Wasabi Ventures Stables LLC—$2,060.

FRIESAN FIRE (Freeze the Fire: Oct. 12, 8th race, $500. Shkhara Fire: Oct. 12, 6th race, $2,750. Skip Thru Da Fire: Oct. 3, 3rd race, $990; Oct. 24, 10th race, $990. Up in Flames: Oct. 3, 1st race, $330; Oct. 24, 6th race, $330): Friesan Fire Syndicate—$5,890.

GOLDEN LAD (Addy's Laddy T N T: Oct. 27, 3rd race, $900. Any Fools Gold: Oct. 13, 1st race, $390; Oct. 27, 2nd race, $495. Banditsgold-enchild: Oct. 5, 6th race, $1,485. Golden Can: Oct. 20, 1st race, $360. Laddie Dance: Oct. 17, 5th race, $1,170. Lady Sriracha: Oct. 24, 4th race, $307.50. Old Bay: Oct. 11, 8th race, $2,160. Omar Comin: Oct. 5, 4th race, $390. Sweet Honey Bee: Oct. 13, 2nd race, $330): Golden Lad Syndicate—$7,987.50.

GREAT NOTION (Brilliant Ice: Oct. 12, 11th race, $2,750. Bruder: Oct. 17, 2nd race, $330. Closertotheheart: Oct. 4, 9th race, $330. Grateful Bred: Oct. 19, 7th race, $397.50. Great Idea: Oct. 12, 9th race, $1,000. Kick Startness: Oct. 5, 4th race, $1,170; Oct. 26, 4th race, $390. Lady Charlotte: Oct. 24, 10th race, $165. Little Bit Risky: Oct. 4, 6th race, $367.50. Meliponini Bee: Oct. 31, 1st race, $292.50. Nick's Notion: Oct. 4, 3rd race, $2,115. Peace Out: Oct. 4, 9th race, $165. Stormy Hollow: Oct. 10, 1st race, $330. Watch Me Disappear: Oct. 25, 4th race, $367.50): Great Notion Syndicate—$10,170.

HOLY BOSS (Biscuitwiththeboss: Oct. 26, 7th race, $2,205. Bosserati: Oct. 12, 9th race, $2,750. Dead Sexy: Oct. 3, 2nd race, $1,845. Granuaile: Oct. 11, 1st race, $247.50. Jolly Boss: Oct. 20, 9th race, $1,845. Nola Boss: Oct. 6, 3rd race, $352.50. Prestige Worldwide: Oct. 18, 6th race, $307.50. Sacred Thunder: Oct. 12, 2nd race, $500): Holy Boss Syndicate—$10,052.50.

HOPPERTUNITY (Ade: Oct. 25, 3rd race, $390. Re Markably: Oct. 12, 2nd race, $1,000. Who Says So: Oct. 18, 6th race, $1,845): Northview Stallion Station Inc.—$3,235.

IMAGINING (Angel Art: Oct. 10, 6th race, $277.50. Buckin' Dreamer: Oct. 5, 1st race, $307.50; Oct. 13, 4th race, $1,485. In the Dance: Oct. 12, 12th race, $200; Oct. 27, 7th race, $1,305. Monday Morning Qb: Oct. 11, 2nd race, $555): Imagining Syndicate—$4,130.

IRISH WAR CRY (Celtic Contender: Oct. 12, 8th race, $2,750. Fivecommatwo: Oct. 12, 1st race, $250. Lovely Charm: Oct. 27, 8th race, $360. Margaret P: Oct. 18, 3rd race, $390. Royal Seamstress: Oct. 5, 2nd race, $435. Spencerian: Oct. 3, 7th race, $2,205; Oct. 12, 10th race, $500. Stormy Irish Lass: Oct. 18, 2nd race, $165. Whiskeyinthejaro: Oct. 11, 5th race, $307.50): Northview Stallion Station, Inc.—$7,362.50.

KOBE'S BACK (Trash Talkin Larry: Oct. 19, 2nd race, $180; Oct. 27, 3rd race, $150): Bonita Farm—$330.

LONG RIVER (Dream River: Oct. 19, 6th race, $165. Running River: Oct. 4, 7th race, $127.50): Long River Syndicate—$292.50.

MADEFROMLUCKY (Bad Boy Blaze: Oct. 3, 1st race, $990. Feelin So Lucky: Oct. 4, 2nd race, $1,485; Oct. 17, 6th race, $495. Joyful Kitten: Oct. 27, 5th race, $990. Lucky Prince: Oct. 10, 7th race, $195. Quiet Dancer: Oct. 13, 2nd race, $990. Rylnnslookinglucky: Oct. 11, 6th race, $495. Sheilahs Warcloud: Oct. 12, 10th race, $1,000): Madefromlucky Syndicate—$6,640.

MOSLER (Ariel Moon: Oct. 19, 1st race, $390. Esperannna: Oct. 18, 1st race, $180. Lady Mosler: Oct. 31, 3rd race, $390. Moon Cache: Oct. 11, 4th race, $1,845. Mose Perfect: Oct. 3, 5th race, $555; Oct. 24, 8th race, $1,665. Mosler Time: Oct. 12, 11th race, $1,000. Next Episode: Oct. 12, 3rd race, $500. Put a Rock On It: Oct. 31, 3rd race, $1,170. Safe Trust: Oct. 12, 6th race, $500. Sharmin: Oct. 19, 1st race, $1,170. Sir Chance a Lot: Oct. 24, 6th race, $165): Mosler Syndicate—$9,530.

NOT FOR LOVE (Clubman: Oct. 12, 12th race, $1,100): Not For Love Syndicate.

SCIPION (The Last Scip: Oct. 12, 5th race, $500; Oct. 26, 9th race, $720): Scipion Syndicate—$1,220.

SEVILLE (GER) (Sky's Not Falling: Oct. 12, 7th race, $1,000): Seville Syndicate.

STREET MAGICIAN (Clouds of White: Oct. 18, 1st race, $1,080): R. Larry Johnson.

SUPER NINETY NINE (Ifeelbadforyouson: Oct. 6, 8th race, $330): Country Life Farm.

UNCLE LINO (Bernie the Star: Oct. 31, 2nd race, $352.50. Do It for Michael: Oct. 12, 2nd race, $2,750): Northview Stallion Station—$3,102.50.

Maryland-bred top earners in 2024

(through December 31)

1. Post Time	$975,000	11. Rominski	$198,390
2. Mindframe	647,360	12. Miss Harriett	195,950
3. Future Is Now	513,155	13. Band Camp	195,580
4. Jaxon Traveler	401,799	14. Fulmineo	193,095
5. Studlydoright	279,680	15. It's Hammertime	184,000
6. Celtic Contender	234,805	16. Brzina	181,375
7. Malibu Beauty	223,865	17. Sacred Thunder	173,360
8. Call Another Play	214,775	18. Next Girl	157,550
9. Brilliant Ice	199,990	19. Golden Charm	155,610
10. Speedyness	198,450	20. Play Harder	153,055

IT'S THAT TIME!

Register your Maryland stallion for the 2025 MARYLAND-BRED RACE FUND PROGRAM

DON'T MISS A BONUS!

If your stallion has offspring of racing age, make sure you register him for the Maryland Fund program! STALLIONS MUST BE REGISTERED EVERY YEAR to be eligible to receive stallion bonuses. Registration fee is $250.

Call the MHBA office at (410) 252-2100 x129 or visit www.marylandthoroughbred.com.
Visa and MasterCard accepted

THE THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY NEWSLETTER

Post Time

- News, views and insights that matter to breeders, owners and racing industry professionals - **February 2025** -

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Thoroughbred Breeders' Association of New Jersey

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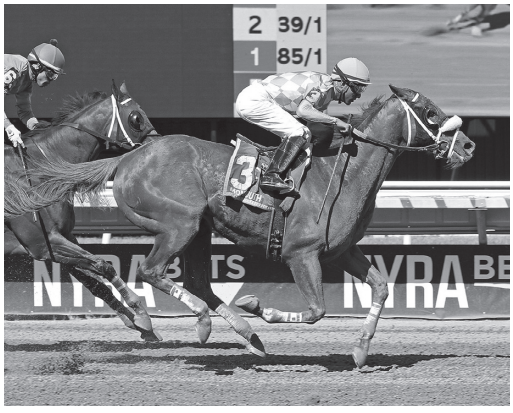
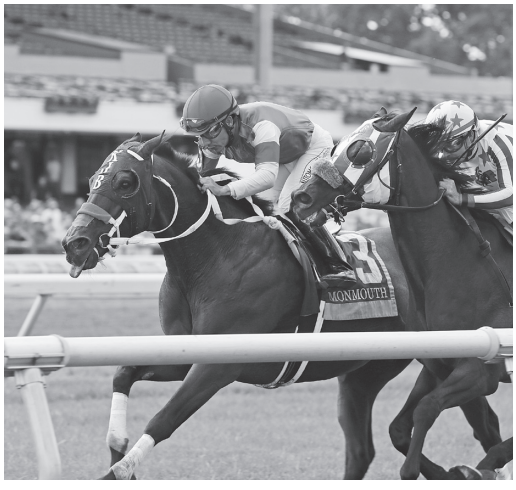
2024 New Jersey-Bred Stakes Winners



AMATTEROFTIME
2024 Earnings $91,567
Winner of Friendly Lover Handicap
Bred by New Farm.
Owned & trained by Silvino Ramirez.

BEL PENSIERO
2024 Earnings $114,250
Winner of the Pinot Grigio Handicap
Bred by ARM Consulting. Owned by Hudson Stable, Let it Ride Equine Holdings & ARM Racing LLC. Trained by Anthony R. Margotta Jr.

BOOK'EM DANNO
2024 Earnings $807,500
Winner of the Gr. 1 Woody Stephens Stakes, Pasco Stakes and Jersey Shore Stakes
Bred by Gregory J. Kilka & Bright View Farm.
Owned by Atlantic Six Racing LLC.
Trained by Derek Ryan.



HE'SPUREGOLD
2024 Earnings $167,800
Winner of the Irish War Cry Handicap, Red Bank Stakes
Bred by John Bowers Jr.
Owned by Roseland Farm Stable.
Trained by Kelly J. Breen

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J J ZO ZO
2024 Earnings $125,343
Winner of Smoke Glacken Stakes
Bred by New Farm. Owned and trained by Jose Armando Garcia.

MIA'S CRUSADE
2024 Earnings $122,200
Winner of the Spruce Fir Handicap, Jersey Girl Handicap
Bred by Dianne Boyken. Owned by Prancing Horse Farm LLC.
Trained by Chuck Spina.

RIDING PRETTY
2024 Earnings $134,180
Winner of Smart N Classy Handicap, Eleven North Handicap
Bred by Holly Crest Farm. Owned by Holly Crest Farm.
Trained by Eddie Owens Jr.

SEA STREAK
2024 Earnings $218,190
Winner of the Long Branch Stakes, Charles J. Hesse III Handicap
Bred by Holly Crest Farm. Owned by Holly Crest Farm.
Trained by Eddie Owens Jr.

2025 Election Results

The Thoroughbred Breeders' Association of New Jersey has elected four directors to serve on the Board of Trustees. James Frangella, Charles Kromann, Anthony R. Margotta Jr., and Diane Simoncini began their terms Jan. 1, 2025.

James Frangella has been passionately involved in the Thoroughbred industry since the 1960s. He gained extensive experience in various roles, including walking hots, mucking stalls, breaking yearlings, and foaling. James received his trainer's license in 1994 and currently trains ten horses, nine of which are proud New Jersey-breds. Additionally, he own four broodmares and a New Jersey-bred weanling sired by Mind Control, showcasing my commitment to enhancing the New Jersey-bred breeding program.

continued next page

SMITHWICK'S SPICE
2024 Earnings $273,775
Winner of the Leinster Turf Dash Stakes, Select Stakes, Joey P. Handicap, Extravagant Kid Handicap
Bred by New Spice Stable. Owned by New Spice Stable. Trained by Douglas Nunn.

SPEAKING
2024 Earnings $63,420
Winner of John J. Reilly Handicap
Bred by Holly Crest Farm. Owned by Holly Crest Farm. Trained by Eddie Owens Jr.

Charles Kromann assumed the lead role in Edgemont Farm, a nine-acre Thoroughbred breeding farm where his parents and he reside in Millstone Township. Since the mid-1980s, the family has built a legacy of New Jersey-breds through their breeding operation, foaling two New Jersey-breds annually. Charles is committed to finding new and innovative ways to bring NJ breeding back to the prominence that our industry and members deserve

Anthony Margotta Jr. has over 40 years experience with conditioning and training Thoroughbred race horses. He has won multiple Grade 1 stakes including the Whitney and Malibu. Anthony integrates all aspects of the horse in his training. He focuses on connecting and communicating with his horses, observing their body language, gallops, works, fitness, eating, rest, sleeping and demeanor. Anthony breeds New Jersey-bred horses under ARM Consulting and achieved success with his first foal, Bel Pensiero, who won the 2024 Pinot Grigio Handicap at Monmouth Park. ARM Consulting welcomed a 2024 foal by Army Mule out of The Girl Luvs Gold.

Diane Simoncini was the farm and breeding/foaling manager of Millie and Larry Flemings breeding farm in Clarksburg. She was responsible for the reproduction management of the mares, and foaling. Diane has owned a farm since in Allentown and has bred horses since 1987. Diane is passionate for the Thoroughbred horse especially in

continued next page

STARSTRUCK NOTION
2024 Earnings $162,623
Winner of Maryland Million Turf Stakes
Bred and owned by Kenneth R. Garcia. Trained by Patrick McBurney.

New Jersey.

"I hope to improve and continue the breeding programs in New Jersey, hope for extended race meets and more races offered for NJ breds." Diane believes her experiences as a breeder, race horse owner, veterinarian, and racetrack veterinarian can contribute a fresh viewpoint for the betterment of the breeding and racing program in New Jersey.

The 2025 Horse Management Seminar: Live! – "Emergencies, Pasture, and Pain... Oh My!"

The New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Department of Animal Sciences, and the Equine Science Center have come together for what they hope is another spectacular seminar. The daylong event will be hosted on Saturday, Feb. 1, at the Cook Student Center on the Rutgers University campus.

Presentations include **"Emergency Preparedness: Many Teams. . . One Mission"** by Eric H. Martin, Operations & Training Officer – Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management; "Small Farm Pasture Management" by Laura Kenny, Penn State Cooperative Extension; "Evaluating Pain in Horses" and a follow-up, "Evaluating Pain in Horses while Riding" by Dr. Kris Hiney, Oklahoma State University; "Basic Saddle Fitting to Reduce Pain in Horses" by Beth Rera, Master Saddle Fitter, Journeyman Farm; and "Health & Management of US Senior Horses" by Dr. Alisa Herbst, Rutgers University. Registration is now live at: https://go.rutgers.edu/2025HMSLiveReg

The 2025 Horse Management Seminar: Webinar Series! – "Pasture, Nutrition, and Pain. . . Oh My!"

With a full list of speakers from across the U.S. we are looking forward to another great webinar series. Join us for **"Farm Management"** on Feb. 11; "Nutrition" on Feb. 18; **"Horse Health & Welfare"** on Feb. 25. More details, as well as the registration portal, will go live within the next few weeks. Each of the evening webinars will begin at 6:30 and end at 8:30 PM EST. Register for one, or all three of these free webinars at: https://go.rutgers.edu/2025VirtualHMSReg

Rutgers Equine Nutrition Course, Spring 2025

Rutgers Equine Nutrition will be taught online in two formats for the Spring 2025 semester. This 14-week program is an undergraduate course that is now offered in two different formats to horse owners, trainers, feed sales representatives, or anyone interested in the topic. Each format comes with a different course workload, level of required interaction, completion documentation, and registration fee. Classes began on Jan. 21 and continue through May.

To earn a Certificate of Completion: Students are expected to be fully engaged each week during the course, submit assignments, complete readings, watch videos, participate in discussions, and complete a final project. If you receive an 80 percent or more in the class along with the Certificate, you will also receive continuing education units (3.6 CEUs) rather than undergraduate college credits.

To earn a Certificate of Course Participation: Course completion will be based on automatically graded quizzes and self-paced practice assignments but has no deadlines or instructor interaction. For more details, go to https://cpe.rutgers.edu/equine-nutrition.

THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

Membership Application

Member Information

NAME _____ SS#/FEDERAL I.D.# _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ COUNTY _____

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Membership Categories

☐ Breeder — A breeder member shall be a person who owns the required interest in a broodmare or registered stallion domiciled in New Jersey; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. A breeder member shall have voting rights.

☐ Owner — An owner member shall be a person who owns a registered New Jersey- bred; who submits an application for membership, and pays the membership dues. An owner member will not have voting rights.

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Membership Dues

A check or money order for $100.00 must accompany this form. Spouses are encouraged to join the **TBANJ** under joint membership status. This fee would total $150.00 per couple. Each spouse must fill out a separate form to accompany the payment. Membership will be effective upon receipt and will be in force each calendar year and must be renewed annually.

THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY
265 Hwy 36
Suite 1R
W. Long Branch, NJ 07764
(732) 542-8880
email: njbreds@gmail.com

North Carolina

THOROUGHBRED ASSOCIATION

February 2025

President's message

Hello all and Happy New Year!

Congratulations to Caroline Cooper, Clint Lowery, Beth Muirhead and Nancy Shufford – all great winners for the month. These are just a few of the NCTA winners as everyone that made it to the track are always a winner in my book.

We look forward to the coming year to be able to share all special moments with each member and their horses.

Thank you all for all of your support through our learning months ahead.

Bonnie Herring, President NCTA
336-622-3089; bherring@rtelco.net

NCTA MISSION STATEMENT

- Promote the Thoroughbred industry in North Carolina
- Provide educational opportunities to our members in all aspects of the Thoroughbred industry
- Provide our members with opportunities to develop working relationships and meet as friends and colleagues, thereby encouraging excellence and outstanding achievements.

Race Results

RAISE A RUCKUS – Winner at Charles Town, Dec. 7; 6½ furlongs on the dirt. Final time 1:22.18. Gelding, 2019, Fiber Sonde—Hot Creek Risin', by Bring the Heat. Owned and bred by Clint Lowery. Raise a Ruckus took the lead and controlled the pace. Raced at the rail on the far turn, he was lightly hand ridden the final yards.

CHAMPAGNE CAMIE – Winner at Los Alamitos, Dec. 8; 6 furlongs on the dirt. Final time 1:11.63. Mare, 2019, Speightster—Ice for the Lady, by Flatter. Bred by Beth Muirhead. Champagne Camie bobbled at the start, two wide, gained control at the three-sixteenth pole and led into the final furlong to the wire.

COLONEL COOPER – Winner of the Joshua Radosevich Memorial Stakes at Mahoning Valley, Dec. 19; 6 furlongs on dirt. Final time 1:13.21. Gelding, 2022, National Flag—Feeling Ethereal, by Union Rags. Owned by Caroline Cooper. Colonel Cooper was bumped leaving the gate, settled at the back on the outside, started a run from five wide coming to the turn, continued to gain ground to the wire for the win.

TINKI ABARRIO – Winner at Gulfstream Dec. 20; 5½ furlongs on all weather track. Final time 1:03.61. Filly, 2021, Runhappy—Proud Dame, by Proud Accolade. Bred by Nancy Shuford. Tinki Abarrio broke slowly, trailed inside early, was three wide around the turn, closed outside and got up late to win.

Conrad Photography

Caroline Cooper's Colonel Cooper splashes to a stakes victory in Ohio.

Lauren King / Coglianese Photography

Nancy Shuford-bred Tinki Abarrio scores at Gulfstream in December.

Hitting the Board

November 29 – December 28, 2024

Date	Horse	Track	NCTA Connection	Results
29-Nov	In Your Life	Del Mar	Bred by Nancy Shuford	3rd
7-Dec	Raise A Ruckus	Charles Town	Bred & Owned By Clint Lowery	WINNER!
7-Dec	Greatandgood	Charles Town	Owner Arlee Arofa	Unplaced
7-Dec	Tiz Sweet Emotion	Turfway Park	Bred By Denise Walsh	Unplaced
7-Dec	Gulfstream Way	Oaklawn Park	Bred by Denise Walsh	3rd
7-Dec	Mom's Martini	Gulfstream	Owned By Shea D Boy's Stable	Unplaced
8-Dec	Champagne Camie	Los Alamitos	Bred By Beth Muirhead	WINNER!
10-Dec	Hartful Hope	Mahoning Valley	Bred By Art Bauer Owner George Ekherdt	Unplaced
12-Dec	Cayenne Creek	Charles Town	Bred By Clint Lowery	Unplaced
13-Dec	Kenny Had a Notion	Charles Town	Owned by Arlee Arkofa	3rd
13-Dec	Double Tough Tiger	Camarero Race Track	Bred By Beth Muirhead	3rd
13-Dec	My Girl Jal	Aqueduct	Bred By Nancy Shuford	Unplaced
14-Dec	Tiz Wicked Strong	Oaklawn Park	Bred By Denise Walsh	2nd
19-Dec	Colonel Cooper	Mahoning Valley	Owned By Carolina Cooper	WINNER!
20-Dec	Tinki Abarrio	Gulfstream	Bred By Nancy Shuford	WINNER!
27-Dec	Managing Misschief	Oaklawn Park	Owned By Carolina Copper In Partnership	3rd
27-Dec	My Girl Jal	Aqueduct	Bred By Nancy Shuford	Unplaced
28-Dec	Hartful Hope	Mahoning Valley	Bred By Art Bauer Owner George Ekherdt	Unplaced

North Carolina Thoroughbred Association

2025 MEMBERSHIP FORM

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☐SPONSOR @ $140.00
☐INDIVIDUAL @ $55.00
☐NON-PROFIT HORSE ASSOCIATIONS @ $20.00(covers cost of magazines)

Membership includes subscriptions to Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Magazine

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Involvement in the Thoroughbred Industry
(Please check any or all pertaining to you)

☐Breeder☐Racing☐ Steeplechase ☐Boarding☐Foaling
☐Lay-ups☐Race Training☐Racing Fan ☐Showing ☐Show Training
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PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: **N.C.T.A.**
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Thank you for your support.

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North Carolina Thoroughbred Association

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PENNSYLVANIA HORSE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

PA Thoroughbred NEWSLETTER

February 2025
pabred.com

PA-BRED REMINDERS

- **Early registration:** Within 365 days of foaling
- **Yearling registration:** Dec. 31 of yearling year
- **Stallion registration:** Feb. 15 of year breeding
- **Broodmare domicile:** Dec. 1 or 14 days after a public sale or entering state if being bred back to PA-sire

VISIT PABRED.COM

- **Racing and breeding news**
- **PA-Bred entries/results**
- **Rules, regulations, forms**

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2025 Pennsylvania stallion roster gets stronger

By Cindy Deubler

A Kentucky Derby winner. . . a Canadian champion. . . Hall of Fame pedigrees. . . dazzling racing careers – the Pennsylvania stallion roster has been enriched with the addition of nine new stallions for the upcoming breeding season. Pennsylvania stallions offer breeders added punch – in addition to their runners earning more through the state's lucrative breeders program, their offspring are eligible for the rich PA-Sired, PA-Bred Stallion Series stakes.

ALEJANDRO - Lola Cash and Built Wright Stables' Alejandro brings a Hall of Fame pedigree to the breeding shed as a son of Preakness-winning two-time Horse of the Year and leading sire Curlin out of the only daughter of Preakness-winning Horse of the Year Rachel Alexandra, Grade 1-winning juvenile filly Rachel's Valentina, a daughter of Preakness-winning champion and top sire Bernardini.

Rachel's Valentina's first foal, Alejandro earned $453,836 in a 35-start career as he competed at 11 different tracks, winning four times and placing in 16 others over five seasons. The allowance winner scored at Churchill Downs, Fair Grounds, Oaklawn and Remington Park at distances up to 1 3/16 miles.

In her first four career starts, Rachel's Valentina won her debut at Saratoga, followed by the Grade 1 Spinaway and seconds in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies-G1 and Ashland Stakes-G1. She retired after six starts with earnings of $738,800.

Rachel Alexandra was the 2009 Horse of the Year and champion 3-year-old filly after wins in the Preakness, Haskell and Woodward, each over males, the Kentucky Oaks-G1 by more than 20 lengths and Mother Goose-G1 by 19½ lengths. She retired with 13 wins and five seconds in 19 starts and earnings of $3.5 million. She was inducted into the Hall of Fame in her first year of eligibility in 2016.

Curlin, who has become a noted sire of sires, was inducted into the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility in 2014.

Bay, 2018, Curlin—Rachel's Valentina, by Langfuhr. Standing his first season at Mountain Springs Farm, Palmyra. $1,500 LFSN; a free lifetime breeding award is included if paying $3,000 to send two mares

BEREN - The Pennsylvania-bred champion 3-year-old and sprinter of 2021, Susan Quick and Christopher Feifarek's seven-time stakes-winning homebred Beren has been retired to stand alongside his sire, Weigelia, at WynOaks Farm.

The bay speedster made a name for himself in 2021, racing at least once a month from January through November, winning seven times, five in stakes – the Gold Fever and Paradise Creek (by 10¾ lengths) at Belmont Park, the Crowd Pleaser (by 9½ lengths going 1 1/16 miles) and Parx Summer Sprint (by 6½ lengths) at Parx, and the Danzig at Penn National – and was caught late when second in the Steel Valley Sprint at Mahoning Valley Race Course. He amassed just shy of $470,000 that year from 12 starts and also earned the title of PA-Preferred Male and Leading Breeding Fund Recipient.

Racing through age 6, Beren's richest victory in 35 career starts came in the 2022 Frank J. De Francis Memorial Dash. Eleven of his 12 victories were at distances from 6 to 7 furlongs. He also ran in 17 consecutive stakes and finished fourth or better in 14 times. His nine stakes-placings included a third in the 2023 Grade 3 General George at Laurel. Beren retires with earnings just shy of $1 million ($944,890).

His dam, millionaire Silmaril (by Diamond), is a Quick and Feifarek homebred with 12 stakes wins, twice in graded company. His third dam is

2025 PA stallions continued from page 1

graded stakes-winning Kattegat's Pride. The family includes graded stakes winner Chip and millionaire Smooth B.

Bay, 2018, Weigelia–Silmaril, by Diamond. Standing his first season at WynOaks Farm, Delta. Private Contract

CURLIN'S WISDOM - Bred on the same cross as Grade 1-winning millionaire Connect, one of the nation's leading young sires, Curlin's Wisdom enters stud after a career in which he was a stakes-placed runner of $455,853 from 29 starts.

The dark bay son of Curlin was a model of consistency at 2 and 3. In 15 straight starts, from October 2021 through December 2022 while racing at Aqueduct, Belmont Park and Saratoga, he finished in the top three 13 times and was fourth in the other two. He finished second in the $250,000 Empire Classic Stakes at 3 in his stakes debut after three straight wins, from 1 mile on the turf to 1⅛ miles on the main track. He won going 1 3/16 miles early in his 4-year-old season.

His dam, the winning Rockport Harbor mare Whisper Wisdom, is a half-sister to two stakes winners including Curlin's son Connect, winner of the Grade 1 Cigar Mile and Grade 2 Pennsylvania Derby, the latter over Gun Runner. Connect has sired the likes of Grade 1 winner and $2-million earner Rattle N Roll.

Whisper Wisdom is the dam of five foals of racing age – the four to sell as yearlings all brought six-figures. Second dam, stakes winner Barkerville Belle, produced graded stakes-winning track record setter and sire Native Regent and addition stakes winners Royal Fair, Morriston Belle and Mr. Villemore. The family includes Grade 1 winner Backseat Rhythm.

Dark bay or Brown, 2019, Curlin–Whisper Wisdom, by Rockport Harbor. Standing his first season at Cabin Creek, Gettysburg. Private Contract

ENTICED - A top-10 nationally-ranked sire with two crops of racing age, Medaglia d'Oro's graded stakes-winning son Enticed moves to Pennsylvania and immediately jumps into second on the state's 2024 stallion earnings list. Bred and raced by Godolphin, he previously stood at Darley's Jonabell Farm in Kentucky.

Now owned by a syndicate, Enticed is the sire of four stakes winners in his first crop, including graded winner Visually, winner of Santa Anita's Senorita Stakes-G3. His runners in 2024 earned more than $3.2 million, for an average of $31,879.

Enticed's first crop of 2-year-olds put him solidly in the top-10 on the freshman sires list in 2023, with 23 winners and earnings of more than $1.2 million. His daughter Shimmering Allure earned $239,095 while winning Aqueduct's Tempted Stakes and finishing second in the Demoiselle Stakes-G2. She made her stakes debut in Grade 1 company.

Enticed was a graded winner at 2 and 3 who earned $595,680 in seven starts. His juvenile season saw him take the 1 1/16-mile Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes-G2 over Tiz Mischief and Promises Fulfilled, and finish third in the Grade 1 Champagne Stakes in his second start after winning his debut at 6 furlongs at Saratoga. Sent on the Triple Crown trail, he won the 1-mile Gotham Stakes-G3 by daylight and finished second in the Grade 2 Wood Memorial.

His dam, $1,666,500-earner and six-time stakes winner It's Tricky, won eight of 14 starts including three Grade 1s – the Coaching Club American Oaks, Acorn and Ogden Phipps. Four times the daughter of Mineshaft was Grade 1-placed, including a second behind Royal Delta in the Breeders' Cup Ladies' Classic. She is

A few words from the Executive Secretary

I'd like to welcome Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike, who enters the ranks of Pennsylvania stallions and will stand at Rich Miller's Mountain Springs Farm in Palmyra. For breeding info on him and all of our PA stallions, please go to pabred.com and take a look at the 2025 Stallion & Boarding Farm Directory. We have nine new stallions along with our recurrent PA-Sires. Pick your next Derby winner!

Congrats to the Gregory and Caroline Bentley-bred 2yo filly Caprice, winner of the $100,000 Gin Talking Stakes on Dec. 28. That makes her 6-for-7 lifetime, five of which were stakes! Wow!

The second leg of the PA-Sired PA-Bred Stallion Series was run on Dec. 30 at PARX. Congratulations to the Desmond C. Wynter-bred Fenton Forever, who went gate-to-wire to win the $100,000 Wait for It Stakes. A shoutout to PA stallion Pat On the Back, whose first-crop runners finished 1st and 2nd!

In our second series race of the day, Pewter Stable-bred Honorable Win (Winchill) won the $100,000 Miss Behaviour Stakes. She also won the Miss Blue Tye Dye in the first leg of the Stallion Series. The third and final leg of the 2024 series will be run in 2025, worth $100,000 for 3yos and 3yo fillies. A $50,000 breeder bonus for horses that finish first, second and third in total points for the series will be paid at that time – $25,000 for first, $15,000 for second and $10,000 for third.

Domicile forms are mandatory and should have been completed by Dec. 1 or when you mare comes into the state if breeding back to a PA stallion or within 14 days of a public sale.

If you are still using paper registrations, please make sure you forward a signed copy of the Code of Ethics, which is attached to the registration form. We will be transitioning to paperless in 2025. As usual, please contact our office with any questions you may have.

Wishing you a fantastic start to 2025, and remember, PA is the only place to Breed and Race! Approximately $26 million will be paid out in 2024 to PA-Bred owners and breeders in Breeder Awards, Owner Bonuses and Restricted Races.

Go PA!!

also the dam of graded stakes-placed 2-year-old filly Enliven. His second dam is graded winner Catboat.

Dark bay or Brown, 2015, Medaglia d'Oro–It's Tricky, by Mineshaft. Standing at Mountain Springs Farm, Palmyra. $5,000 LFSN

IMPOSING - Royally-bred Imposing, out of Tapit's champion daughter Untapable, is the first son of Hall of Famer Gun Runner to stand in the region.

Gun Runner, the 2017 Horse of the Year and champion older dirt male, ranks as one of the top stallions in the world today, with more than $22 million in progeny earnings in 2024 alone. Counted among his four Grade 1 winners last year is Breeders' Cup Classic champ Sierra Leone.

Gun Runner won six Grade 1s including the Breeders' Cup Classic, and amassed $15,988,500. Imposing's dam Untapable earned the Eclipse Award as champion 3-year-old filly in 2014 when she won six of seven starts, all graded stakes, including the Breeders' Cup Distaff-G1 against older mares as the favorite. Other Grade 1 wins came in the Kentucky Oaks, Cotillion and Mother Goose at 3 and the Apple Blossom Handicap at 4. She retired with earnings of $3,926,625 from 20 starts.

Second dam Fun House, a daughter of Breeders' Cup Turf-G1 winner Prized, was a graded winner of $432,922. She was named Broodmare of the Year after also producing Grade 1 winner and sire Paddy O'Prado. The family includes multiple graded stakes-winning millionaire Red Route One, a son of Gun Runner out of a full sister to Untapable.

Imposing was unraced due to injury.

Bay, 2021, Gun Runner–Untapable, by Tapit. Standing his first season at Cabin Creek, Gettysburg. Private Contract

MAGIC SPOON - Undefeated juvenile Magic Spoon is the first son of champion 2-year-old Good Magic to stand at stud in the region. The chestnut 4-year-old is one of 20 stakes winners by one of the hottest young sires in the world today. With just three crops to race, Good Magic is already the sire of Kentucky Derby winner Mage and Preakness winner Dornoch, plus 10 other graded winners. The son of Curlin ranked in the top 20 nationally by progeny earnings in 2024.

A member of Good Magic's second crop, Magic Spoon captured Santa Anita's Golden State Juvenile Stakes over 11 rivals at 7 furlongs as the favorite in only his second start. In his debut he produced a great closing kick – flying at the end to get up after a troubled trip to break his maiden over the Santa Anita main track going 6 furlongs. He was sidelined by injury after his stakes victory and retires with earnings of $136,350.

Magic Spoon is out of stakes-placed Canadian Mistress, a full sister to $389,420-earning stakes winner Frontier Warrior (by the Gone West stallion Canadian Frontier) and half-sister to $237,213 stakes winner Midnight Ruler. The family traces back to the influential Two Rings, dam of champion Bayford and sires Northern Baby and Northern Ringer.

Chestnut, 2021, Good Magic–Canadian Mistress, by Canadian Frontier. Standing his first season at Cabin Creek, Gettysburg. Private Contract

RICH STRIKE - Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike becomes the latest classic winner to stand in the state. The son of Travers Stakes-G1 winner Keen Ice and grandson of leading sire Curlin enters stud with career earnings of $2,526,809 in 14 starts.

The chestnut burst onto the racing scene in spectacular fashion in the 2022 Kentucky Derby. The longest shot in the field of 20 – getting in last minute after a late scratch – he rallied from more than 17 lengths back, weaved his way through the field, caught favorite Epicenter in deep stretch and edged away. He had earned enough points to get into the field when he rallied to finish third in his previous start, the Grade 3 Jeff Ruby Steaks on Turfway Park's all-weather track.

Rich Strike won or placed in four stakes, three graded, in his career. He demolished his rivals when winning a maiden claimer at Churchill Downs by more than 17 lengths going 1 mile on the main track at 2. From the end of his juvenile campaign until his final start in May 2023, he raced exclusively in stakes. He missed by a head to the year-older Hot Rod Charlie in the 2022 Grade 2 Lukas Classic Stakes at Churchill and finished fourth behind Epicenter (in a three-horse photo with Cyberknife and Zandon for second) in the Travers Stakes-G1 as well as was fourth behind Flightline in the Breeders' Cup Classic-G1.

Out of Canadian champion 3-year-old filly Gold Strike (by Smart Strike), Rich Strike is a half-brother to graded winner Llanarmon and to the dam of graded-winning Pennsylvania-bred millionaire Neecie Marie.

Chestnut, 2019, Keen Ice—Gold Strike, by Smart Strike. Standing his first season at Mountain Springs Farm, Palmyra. $6,500 LFSN, special consideration for PA foaling mares

TYSON - Canadian champion older horse of 2023, Tyson stands his first season as the property of Darryl and Jill Myers' new Thoroughbred operation, Stone Jug Ranch, in Dillsburg.

Tyson was on the board five times in seven starts his championship season, four in consecutive graded stakes. The son of leading sire Tapit counted wins in the 1 1/16-mile Seagram Cup-G2 and 1 1/8-mile Dominion Day-G3 and was third in the Eclipse-G2, all over Woodbine's synthetic track. He traveled to Saratoga for his main track debut in the Jockey Club Gold Cup-G1 and ran third, less than 3 lengths behind Bright Future. In his first start in 2024 he was second in the Eclipse-G2. He retires with a record of 10-4-1-2 and earnings of $378,548.

Tyson is from the dynamic family that descends directly from Broodmare of the Year Better Than Honour, his third dam. He is out of the winning Smart Strike mare Honouring, a full sister to Grade 1-winning juvenile filly Streaming and stakes winner Treasuring and a half-sister to three other stakes performers. Her half-sisters include the dams of Belmont Stakes-G1 and Travers Stakes-G1 winner and champion 3-year-old Arcangelo, and multiple graded stakes-winning sprinter Cezanne.

The rich family history boasts Belmont Stakes winners Rags to Riches, the champion 3-year-old filly of 2007, and Jazil, as well as Irish champion Man of Iron and multiple graded winners Casino Drive and Greatest Honour, all appearing under Better Than Honour, the most expensive broodmare ever sold (at $14 million). Kentucky Oaks-G1 winner Blush With Pride is his fourth dam.

Gray/Roan, 2019, Tapit–Honouring, by Smart Strike. Standing his first season at Stone Jug Ranch, Dillsburg. $3,500, or $2,500 for multiple bookings, with special consideration for Pennsylvania foaling and stakes-producing mares

ZOZOS - Graded stakes-winning miler Zozos, the first son of major sire Munnings to stand in the region, has been acquired by Rodney Eckenrode to join the Equistar Training and Breeding roster.

A millionaire who won seven of his 15 starts, from 6 furlongs to 1 1/16 miles, Zozos excelled as a miler. His victories at the distance came in the Ack Ack Stakes-G3 and Knicks Go Overnight Stakes at Churchill Downs and Ellis Park's Hanshin Stakes. When racing beyond a mile, he captured a 1 1/16-mile Oaklawn Park allowance by more than 10 lengths and two Fair Grounds allowances by daylight margins.

Zozos made his stakes debut at Fair Grounds in his third start, the 2022 Louisiana Derby-G2 at 1 3/16 miles, and finished second to Epicenter, who would later win the Travers Stakes-G1. That effort earned him a berth in the Kentucky Derby-G1 (he finished midpack). Last year he ran third to Gun Pilot, missing second by a neck, in the Grade 1 Churchill Downs Stakes at 7 furlongs. He retires with earnings of $1,011,463.

His dam Papa's Forest, a winning daughter of Forestry who earned $233,593 while racing from 2 to 6, has one other foal of racing age, $334,948-earner Emerald Forest, the current 7-furlong track record holder at Louisiana Downs after zipping 1:21.07 in 2021.

Zozos' third dam Barbara Sue, a half-sister to Grade 1 winner and sire Super May and four-time graded winner and sire Ide, raced through age 8, won five stakes, and produced graded winner Diamond On the Run and additional stakes winners Tropical Blossom and Barbette. The family includes champion Consultora, Grade 1-winning millionaire Celestine and Japanese multimillionaire Piilani Highway.

Dark bay or brown, 2019, Munnings–Papa's Forest, by Forestry. Standing his first season at Equistar Training and Breeding, Annville. $2,500 LFSN

PA-Bred Fund Statistics: Top Earners

January 1 through November 30, 2024

LEADING EARNERS - TOTAL AWARDS

Breeder Name	Breeder	Stallion	Total	Breeder Name	Breeder	Stallion	Total
Warriors Reward	684,354	188,374	872,728	Wyn Oaks Farm LLC	103,961	165,824	269,785
Uptowncharlybrown Stud LLC	472,059	211,091	683,150	Pewter Stable	188,128	53,747	241,875
Steven W. Young Racing LLC	287,318	98,443	385,761	Arrowwood Farm Inc.	199,030	0	199,030
Northview Stallion Station Inc.	0	357,626	357,626	Joseph Imbesi	188,239	0	188,239
Blackstone Farm LLC	306,399	0	306,399	St. Omer's Farm	185,706	0	185,706
Glenn E. Brok LLC	228,130	68,525	296,655	Sylmar Farm Inc.	156,845	0	156,845

LEADING STALLIONS

Fund Money includes Stallion Awards only

Stallion Name	Stallion Owner / Manager	No. of Races	Award Total	Stallion Name	Stallion Owner / Manager	No. of Races	Award Total
Uptowncharlybrown	Uptowncharlybrown Stud LLC	473	211,091	Peace and Justice	Steven W. Young Racing LLC	201	98,443
Warrior's Reward	Warriors Reward	437	188,374	Winchill	Pewter Stable	134	53,747
Weigelia	Wyn Oaks Farm LLC	306	161,319	Jump Start	Northview Stallion Station Inc.	183	44,825
Hoppertunity	Northview Stallion Station Inc.	365	151,026	Well Spelled	Godstone Farm LP	116	39,353
Uncle Lino	Northview Stallion Station Inc.	264	121,504	Talent Search	Glenn E. Brok LLC	60	37,436
Social Inclusion	Social Inclusion Partners LLC	195	110,927	Red Vine	DB Dojo LLC	79	31,244

LEADING HORSES

Fund Money includes: PA-Bred Races, Breeder and Stallion Awards and PA-Bred Owner-Bonus Payments. **Denotes PA-sired*

Horse	Pedigree	Breeder	Races	Stakes	Breeder Award	Stallion Award	Bonus	Total
The Boy's Warrior *	Warrior's Reward - Inciarte	Warriors Reward	4	138,800	64,880	16,220	5,400	225,300
Smooth B *	Weigelia - Katarica Disco	St. Omer's Farm	5	60,000	84,000	21,000	0	165,000
Fierce and Strong *	Hoppertunity - Doubleclickdamouse	Ultra Championship Racing LLC	6	81,020	50,068	12,517	10,570	154,175
Confirmed Star *	Uptowncharlybrown - Its My Town	Uptowncharlybrown Stud LLC	10	9,800	90,312	22,578	26,680	149,370
Morning Matcha	Central Banker - Home Ice	Crane Thoroughbred Services LLC	3	119,880	22,800	0	0	142,680
Pachelbel *	Hoppertunity - Brilliant Sunshine	Newell Thoroughbreds Ltd.	12	19,600	69,142	17,285	29,644	135,671
Traders Luck *	Weigelia - Deanies Dancer	Sylmar Farm Inc.	9	20,000	59,736	14,934	33,240	127,910
Capo *	Peace and Justice - Seven Dreams	Steven W Young Racing LLC	10	43,640	47,643	11,911	21,088	124,282
Veeson *	Il Villano - Springingintherein	Chuck Russo	7	9,800	62,457	15,604	28,012	115,873
Honorable Win *	Winchill - Honorable Partner	Pewter Stable	2	75,200	30,080	7,520	0	112,800
Foxy Junior	Cuba - Foxy Drummer	Dianne L. Stern	5	64,500	25,680	0	9,600	99,780
Twilight Dancer	Tapiture - Moonlight Basin	Warriors Reward	8	58,200	27,160	0	13,900	99,260

**Denotes PA-sired*

SCTOBA

South Carolina

Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025

Racing Across the Nation

Five South Carolina training center graduates crossed the finish line first in stakes races between Nov. 27 and Dec. 7.

Two Randy and Kala Rentz Training Center students won stakes at Parx Racing and Penn National Nov. 27. The 2-year-old gelding **Crab Daddy** proved best in the Pennsylvania Nursery Stakes at Parx. Second early on, Crab Daddy had to steady for a moment before rallying in the stretch and drawing away late to win by 3¾ lengths. In his two career starts, he has a win and a second-place finish. **Tudox Opportunity** captured his first stakes victory in the Chocolate Town Stakes at Penn National on the same day. Tudox Opportunity battled for the lead for the first half mile, put his head in front and would not be denied, proving best at the 1-mile distance by three-quarters of a length. He has six wins in 11 career starts.

On Dec. 1, **Sacred Wish** became a Grade 1 winner by besting her opposition in the Matriarch Stakes at Del Mar. She is now a two-time stakes winner. Sacred Wish stalked the leaders to the top of the stretch, angled out and, in a hard fought stretch run, reached the finish line a neck in front. In 17 career starts, she has finished in the top three 13 times, including four wins, and has accumulated $985,138 in career earnings. Sacred Wish was prepared for her racing career by Cary Frommer in Aiken.

On Dec. 7, Donna Freyer saw two of her former students win stakes. **Get Smokin** is a six-time stakes winner after capturing the Valedictory Stakes-G3 at Woodbine. Five of his stakes wins have been Grade 2s or 3s. In the Valedictory Stakes, Get Smokin broke on top and never looked back. He was in total command throughout the race and crossed the finish line 3¾ lengths in front. Get Smokin's career earnings have now climbed to $2,131,484.

Tony Eclipse, bred and owned by Camden Training Center owner and SCTOBA member Stuart Grant's The Elkstone Group LLC, pressed the leader to the top of the stretch before taking control and cruising to a 3¾-length victory in the Maryland Juvenile Stakes at Laurel Park. As a 2-year-old, Tony Eclipse started five times, recording two wins, a second and a third place finish.

Post Time 2024 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year

Post Time, a two time graded stakes winner in 2024, was named the 2024 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year. Post Time won the Carter Handicap-G2 at Aqueduct and General George Stakes-G3 at Laurel Park. He ran nine times in 2024, recording four wins, three seconds and two third place finishes. Last year alone, he earned $975,000 to bring his career earnings to $1,227,910.

Post Time was purchased by Cary Frommer at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic Fall Yearling Sale in 2021 and shortly thereafter sold to Ellen Charles, owner of Hillwood Stable. Post Time is by Frosted out of Vielsalm by Fairbanks. He went through the breaking process in Cary Frommer's program at the Aiken Training Track. He is now trained by Brittany Russell and his regular jockey is her husband, Sheldon.

The Aiken Trained Horse of the Year was first awarded in 2002. The honoree must have trained in Aiken County and have won at least one graded stakes during the year or exceeded $500,000 in career earnings.

Past winners include Congaree (2002), Wando (2003), Limehouse (2005), Bob and John (2006), Country Star (2007), Midshipman (2008), Quality Road (2009-2010), It's Tricky (2011), Alpha (2012), Palace Malice (2013 and 2014), Curalina (2015 and 2016), Dickinson (2017), Still Having Fun (2018), Concrete Rose (2019), Madone (2020) and Private Creed (2022 and 2023).

Heart of the Turf in Aiken

The Keeneland Library exhibit *The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers* was featured at the Aiken Racing Thoroughbred Hall of Fame and Museum from Dec. 4 through Jan. 17.

The traveling exhibit, developed and shared by the Keeneland Library, highlights the lives and careers of 100 African American horsemen and women from the mid-1800's to the present. One-of-a-kind photographs from the Keeneland Library collections capture moments across their varied careers, while biographical vignettes honor their lasting legacies.

From racetrack superstars to behind-the-scenes caretackers, *The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers* showcases select stories of the countless African Americans who forged their way in Kentucky and beyond from the era of slavery to the present, making the racing industry what it is today.

The exhibit has traveled around the country. Its next appearance will be at the Maryland Horse Library and Education Center in Reisterstown, Md., in February.

South Carolina connections in Cigar Mile

One of the premier handicap races run each year is the $500,000 Cigar Mile-G2 at Aqueduct. In 2024, three of the participants had South Carolina connections. The winner, Locked, is owned by Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners and Walmac Farm.

In 2013, Aron Wellman, the founder of Eclipse, formed a merger with Cot Campbell's Dogwood Stable. To this day, Eclipse maintains an office in Aiken. Due to a ligament strain behind his knee, Locked did not run from Nov. 3, 2023, when he was third in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile-G1, until winning an allowance at Aqueduct Oct. 19. In six starts, he has four wins and two thirds.

Post Time, named 2024 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year, finished a strong rallying third, beaten only 2½ lengths. Post Time was purchased as a yearling by Cary Frommer of Aiken before being sold to Ellen Charles, owner of Hillwood Stable. He is a graduate of Frommer's breaking program.

Book'em Danno, a five-time stakes winner, including the Woody Stephens-G1, finished fifth, beaten 5½ lengths. Book'em Danno was developed for his racing career by Randy and Kala Rentz at their training center in Erhardt.

The connections of all three plan to continue racing them in 2025.

South Carolina-trained winners

Horse	*Training Center*	*Date*	*Track*	*Type of Race*
Irish Exit	Travis Durr Training Center	11/20/24	Parx Racing	Allowance
Mybronxbaby	Travis Durr Training Center	11/21/24	Aqueduct	Allowance
Carolina Smokeshow	Travis Durr Training Center	11/21/24	Churchill Downs	Maiden Special Weight
Caribbean Pleasure	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/21/24	Charles Town	Allowance
Quilling	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/22/24	Penn National	Maiden Special Weight
Sir Kartrite	Travis Durr Training Center	11/23/24	Aqueduct	Maiden Special Weight
Banned for Life	Aiken - Cary Frommer	11/23/24	Churchill Downs	Allowance
China Beach	Kate Dalton	11/23/24	Aiken	Maiden Special Weight
High Dollar Date	Aiken - Cary Frommer	11/24/24	Mountaineer Park	Allowance
Big Boys Answer	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/25/24	Parx Racing	Starter Allowance
Bustino Santino	Travis Durr Training Center	11/26/24	Finger Lakes	Maiden Special Weight
Right Wing Runner	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/26/24	Parx Racing	Allowance
Royal Suspect	Travis Durr Training Center	11/27/24	Finger Lakes	Allowance
CRAB DADDY	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/27/24	Parx Racing	Pennsylvania Nursery S
Maggie's Boy	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/27/24	Finger Lakes	Maiden Special Weight
TUDOX OPPORTUNITY	Rentz Farm Training Center	11/27/24	Penn National	Chocolate Town S
SACRED WISH	Aiken - Cary Frommer	12/01/24	Del Mar	Matriarch S-G1
Dropline	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/02/24	Parx Racing	Allowance
Warrior's Miss	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/04/24	Penn National	Starter Allowance
Bartholdy	Travis Durr Training Center	12/06/24	Los Alamitos	Starter Allowance
Fabs	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/06/24	Delta Downs	Allowance
Warrior Ted	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/06/24	Penn National	Starter Allowance
GET SMOKIN	Custom Care - D. Freyer	12/07/24	Woodbine	Valedictory S-G3
TONY ECLIPSE	Custom Care - D. Freyer	12/07/24	Laurel Park	Maryland Juvenile S
Party At Sam's	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/09/24	Parx Racing	Allowance
Qualified Hire	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/12/24	Penn National	Maiden Special Weight
Caribbean Comedy	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/14/24	Charles Town	Maiden Special Weight
Condensation	McCutchen Training Center	12/14/24	Remington Park	Allowance
Lonesome Boy	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/16/24	Parx Racing	Allowance
Dropline	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/17/24	Parx Racing	Allowance
Quercus	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/17/24	Parx Racing	Maiden Special Weight
Striders Slider	Rentz Farm Training Center	12/18/24	Penn National	Starter Allowance

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA'S 2025 RACING CALENDAR TAKES SHAPE

Horse racing dates and events for the 2025 calendar year in Virginia are set and include a healthy combination of thoroughbred, standardbred and steeplechase competitions that will be held at venues across the Commonwealth.

The season kicks off March 1 with the Rappahannock Hunt Point-to-Point (PTP) meet at The Hill in Boston, Virginia and concludes November 1 with the Montpelier Hunt Races at James Madison's homestead in Montpelier Station. In between, six more spring Point-to-Points will be conducted — three of which feature a sprinkling of National Steeplechase Association (NSA) sanctioned jump races — in addition to six full NSA sanctioned jump meets.

Following Rappahannock's kickoff event, the PTP schedule continues with the Warrenton Hunt PTP March 15 at the Airlee Race Course, the Piedmont Fox Hounds PTP March 22 at the Salem Course in Upperville, the Old Dominion Hounds PTP April 5 at the Ben Venue Farm in Ben Venue, the Blue Ridge Hunt PTP April 12 at the Woodley Farm in Berryville, the Loudoun Hunt PTP April 20 at Morven Park in Leesburg, and the Middleburg Hunt PTP April 27 at Glenwood Park. The first five PTP's are on Saturdays and the last two fall on Sundays.

Sanctioned steeplechase races will be mixed in at the Old Dominion, Blue Ridge and Loudoun Hunt PTP meets. "We thought it would be a good idea to reach out to some of these established Point-to-Point events and give them a chance to become a hybrid meet where they could include regulated NSA sanctioned races in addition to other ones they traditionally have run that are not regulated," said NSA Director of Racing Bill Gallo.

A trio of long established one-day NSA sanctioned jump meets will be held in spring with another four slated for fall. The Middleburg Spring Races kick things off April 19 at Glenwood Park followed by the Foxfield Spring Races April 26 in Charlottesville and the 100th running of the Virginia Gold Cup Races on May 3. The falls docket includes the Foxfield Races October 5, Middleburg Fall Races on October 11, International Gold Cup card on October 25 and the 90th running of the Montpelier Hunt Races a week later.

The Old Dominion Hounds Point-to-Point will feature several NSA sanctioned races as part of its card (Douglas Lees).

A total of 44 pari-mutuel thoroughbred race days at Colonial Downs in New Kent will take place over two separate meets for the first time ever. A new three-day spring meet will debut March 13 -15 and feature dirt racing only, including the $500,000 Virginia Derby, to be followed by a 41-day summer stand from July 9 - September 13.

The Virginia Derby, now a points race on the Road to the Kentucky Derby, will transition to the dirt after 21 years on turf and highlight the spring session on March 15. The $250,000 Virginia Oaks, also now a Kentucky Oaks points race, will be on Derby Day card as well. Post time will be 12:30 PM on Thursday and Friday and 12 Noon Saturday for the Virginia Derby card.

The expanded summer thoroughbred schedule will feature racing four days per week, Wednesday through Saturday, with a post time of 12:30 PM except Fridays when twilight cards start at 4 PM. Racing also will be offered on Labor Day, Monday, September 1. Sundays will serve as a make-up day for any cards that are cancelled during the meet.

Colonial's "Festival of Racing" and its three graded stakes — the G1 Arlington Million, G2 Beverly D and G2 Secretariat — is slated for Saturday, August 9 and will have a special 12 Noon post time. Steeplechase races will also be mixed in throughout the campaign. More details are at colonialdowns.com.

A pair of seven-week pari-mutuel standardbred meets totaling 28 race days will be held at Shenandoah Downs in Woodstock, pending VRC approval. The spring campaign will extend from April 26 - June 8 while the tenth annual fall season will run from September 13 - October 26.

Information on Virginia's overall horse racing and breeding industry can be found at virginiahorseracing.com.

CONDITION BOOK FOR COLONIAL SPRING MEET NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

New Colonial Downs Racing Secretary Dan Bork has released the condition book for the New Kent track's three-day, all-dirt spring meet in March.

While the Virginia Derby and Virginia Oaks are expected to attract top 3-year-olds from

Carloun won the Grade 1 William Allison Stakes during last fall's International Gold Cup card (Douglas Lees).

Colonial Downs' 3-day spring meet will only feature dirt races (VEA photo).

Adam Ainspan with his Tapit Stakes winner, Harlan Estate (VEA photo).

across the country, there are several lucrative options for Virginia-restricted runners topped by a pair of overnight handicaps – the $150,000 Stellar Wind, a six-furlong dash for older fillies and mares and the $150,000 Boston, a seven-furlong race for older horses – headlining the Friday, March 14 card.

Maiden Special Weight races will go for $75,000 for open runners and $93,750 for Virginia-restricted horses. A first-level allowance race carries an $80,000 purse and the complimentary Virginia-restricted event is worth $100,000. A pair of Virginia-restricted maiden claiming races will also be carded with a purse of $43,750.

Nominations for the Virginia Derby, Virginia Oaks and the two overnight handicaps close February 26. Entries for the Virginia Derby and Virginia Oaks will be taken at Colonial Downs on March 8. The barn area opens March 6.

VIRGINIA HORSE OWNER ADAM AINSPAN'S PAIR OF $500,000 STAKES WINS CAME WITH A THOROUGHBRED AND A STANDARDBRED

64-year-old Virginia small animal veterinarian Adam Ainspan didn't purchase his first racehorse until the age of 42, and after finding initial success, grew his operation over the next two decades. It was in year number 21 and 22 though — the last two — that he has experienced a his biggest thrills.

On August 31, 2023, Ainspan's thoroughbred horse Harlan Estate captured the $500,000 Tapit Stakes at Kentucky Downs after being sent off at odds of 37-1. Fourteen months later on October 26, 2024, his standardbred horse Call Me Goo — which was certified in Virginia — won the $496,000 Breeder's Crown Open Mare Trot Championship at The Meadowlands on harness racing's grandest stage.

Two wins, each with a half million purse, within nearly a year of each other and interestingly, with different breeds. Not an everyday occurrence but to Ainspan, who races under the Graham Grace Stable moniker, named after his children's middle names, it wasn't a complete surprise.

"I was shocked a bit, but not totally surprised," he said. "My passion early on in life was horses and always thought if I owned a horse someday I would do well no matter what the breed was."

Ainspan grew up in Albany, just south of Saratoga where he said everybody was into horses. "I had friends who owned standardbreds and always knew it was something I wanted to do."

Ainspan had immediate success with a $26,000 standardbred purchase in 2002, his very first. The horse, No Wishes, continued racing until 2010 and when his career was over, had amassed $373,000 in earnings. His life mark came at Colonial Downs in 2004. "His success allowed us to buy a similar horse, which was followed by our third, Great George Two.

Great George Two competed four years, from 2004–2007, and among his 12 wins was a victory in the Virginia Breeder's 2-Year-Old Colt/Gelding Trot Championship at Colonial in 2004. He was a $25,000 purchase and went on to win $436,864.

"He is the background for what we have going today," said Ainspan. "Great George Two is the father to Call Me Goo's mom and he has had some good ones in between which has kept the cash flowing well. If the first horse wasn't so successful, I'm not sure we'd be where we are today." Call Me Goo has won 23 of 37 races with earnings of $945,898.

Ainspan's interest in the thoroughbred horse world began fifteen years ago when he owned a minor percentage in a broodmare partnership at the invitation of a friend. That eventually led to the purchase of his Tapit Stakes winner, Harlan Estate, a $150,000 buy at the 2022 Keeneland Horses of Racing Age sale. The now 6-year-old Kantharos gelding took fourth in a Colonial Downs allowance just before his Tapit Stakes win.

"I was semi-retired at that point and sold a good part of my veterinary practice," said Ainspan, "So had funding available for the purchase. After interviewing people and finding the right trainer in Whit Beckman, we went forward and bought two racehorses, including Harlan Estate, and have since added a number of yearlings which have been pretty successful."

"That stakes win at Kentucky Downs was a great experience," he added. "He didn't get much respect from the betting public. He is a smart horse and a great athlete. If he thinks he can win, he'll really try, but if he doesn't think he can win, he won't try. It was also my trainer's first stakes win ever. It was nice to see things come together for a trainer who was just starting his career and with people that you actually like from a team you built."

Two recent thoroughbred wins came with C'Est Cheese, who captured a maiden special weight October 4 at Keeneland and with Agoo, who crossed first in a $80,000 claimer September 14 at Churchill Downs.

After achieving success with both breeds, Ainspan was asked which he prefers at this point. "I can't say I like one over the other but I've had more success with standardbreds. The breeds are very, very similar but different at the same time. I can't say that the Kentucky Downs win was any less thrilling than the Breeder's Crown win. And I get the same feeling from wins I've had in Canada with Call Me Goo."

Heading into 2025, Ainspan has a combined stable of 30 horses from both breeds. His home base is Clifton, Virginia though his horses reside elsewhere based on whether or not they are racing. His competing thoroughbreds are at Fair Grounds and the rest are in Kentucky. His standardbreds are in both New Jersey and Maryland.

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Virginia Breeders Fund

West Virginia
THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
Newsletter February 2025

The Year in Review

By Jeff Gilleas

This is the time of year I like to subjectively chronicle my hierarchy of last year's West Virginia accomplishments, both equine and human. As always, familiar words like earnings, sacrifice and change jockey for position in the headlines.

My venerable crystal ball revealed that Father Time has continued to chip away at an accelerated rate, the number one characteristic horsemen universally possess. . . Heart!

The past 12 months recorded enough tears to dampen our little three-quarter-mile oval, as we emotionally paid homage to friends gone too soon.

◆

My quintessential memory of 2024 was the year-long battle that ensued in the trainer standings. True, this column is generally slanted toward horse achievements, however I felt compelled to enumerate the top-10 horsemen that grappled for first place, opting to shed light on the unique blend of dedicated competitors.

Having first-hand knowledge of this testing profession I can tell you it is one of the most grueling jobs to master on the planet. You think parenting is a difficult, try multiplying that two-legged factor by four. Horses can be brilliant, obstinate, unique, incorrigible and downright mystifying. Training them involves sleepless nights, long days, bumps and bruises and questionable compensation.

Most Americans can only reference high profile races on television that immortalize stylishly-attired individuals in the winner's circle, high-fiving their crew, while delivering a hastily prepared victory speech. Let me enlighten you, just that morning the same trainer probably had a groom pull a no-show for work, an exercise rider get dumped coming home on a green 2-year-old, the bookkeeper call and say "we need to talk," and voicemails left by the feed and tack man.

That's the real world and we still do it, and love it. Why? Because there is nothing like this game. It is the ultimate collaborative effort between man and beast.

Horse trainers ooze patience, ambition, passion, conscientiousness, knowledge, experience and goals. I hold our group of overachievers in high regard, because nine out of the top 10 reside within a stones throw of the stable gate, the majority own/lease a working farm, they contribute to the local economy, and staunchly support the racing/breeding develop programs. In essence, they put THEIR money, where THEIR mouths are. Every horsemen in this state is a lifeline to the sustainability of the industry.

Top-10 conditioners by wins at Charles Town Races (2024)

1) Anthony Farrior
2) Ronney W. Brown
3) Jeff C. Runco
4) Tim Grams
5) Mike Jones Jr.
6) Javier Contreras
7) Cyndy McKee
8) Ronnie Sigler
9) Kristy Petty
10) Stacey Viands

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Second on my enviable metrics highlight reel was my favorite night of the year, the West Virginia Breeders Classics. Great theater, the "Wow" factor, and the award for best domestic cooking show went to Beau Ridge Farm owner/trainer Cyndy McKee.

Awash in crack runners, Cyndy's home invasion started in the first race with the narrow defeat of Im the Director in the Vincent Moscarelli Memorial for 2-year-olds. Her Beau Ridge Farm contingent followed up that effort with a solid third-place effort in the Dash for Cash with Youthinkthatsfunny.

Race 3 was the Russell Road, and perhaps the finest performance of the night was turned in courtesy of the lightly-raced Catch the Humor. A resounding 10½-length margin of victory really kicked in an endorphin rush for the team in Barn 10.

Running up the score in race 4 was the otherworldly 3-year-old filly Direct the Cat. Winning the West Virginia Lottery Breeders Classic with consummate ease by 9¼ lengths established that an unassuming horse can become a champion.

The parade to the bank continued in race 6, as No Change waged an epic confrontation with the durable Teachintherelease and bested that rival, affirming regency over his two-turn sprinting adversaries.

The goal of every distaff runner in the state is to pursue and bring home the Cavada Stakes title.

In race 7, Overnight Pow Wow continued to rewrite the record books for her powerful lineage and farm of her birth. Mentally ahead of the 3-year-old curve, the Fiber Sonde filly gift-wrapped a substantial payday for Cyndy, unfortunately at the expense of two-time Cavada winner Hessica and Cyndy's close friend, owner-trainer Kristy Petty.

◆

J.D. Salinger wrote, "An artist's only concern is to shoot for some kind of perfection, and on his own terms, not anyone else's."

The 2024 Media Eclipse Awards winner was announced and Scott Serio's photograph of Skippylongstocking gliding through the stretch to victory in the Charles Town Classic-G2, received the esteemed honor. Serio's image appeared in the October edition of *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred* and depicted the attractive image of nighttime racing.

The shot was hailed as "cinematic" by Charles McIntosh, Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races Director of Racing Operations. "I didn't realize the journey Mr. Serio experienced, while setting up his camera that afternoon, but will forever be grateful to him for his artistry."

Apparently, the gifted photographer was met by a swarm of bees while ducking under the inside rail, stung repeatedly, and ultimately transported to Jefferson Memorial Hospital for treatment.

McIntosh further commented, "Mr. Serio's touching reaction, great racing can be as dramatic at a place like Charles Town as it is in cathedrals of racing like Saratoga, Churchill and Santa Anita put the cherry on top of our greatest night of racing action."

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According to statistics released by the *BloodHorse*, the titanic battle between prolific sires Juba and Fiber Sonde went down to the wire, with Juba ($2,088,253) edging out longtime annual leader Fiber Sonde ($1,793,595). A son of Tapit, Juba is known for his offspring's versatility, soundness and sensibility.

Congratulations to the team at Taylor Mountain Farm!

◆

Kudos to Coleswood Farm and owners Jeff and Susan Runco as they left the comfort of the suburbs, to rule – if only for a day – in the Big Apple. Their homebred Coastal Mission won the Grade 3 Forty Niner Stakes and now reigns alongside Muad'dib in Barn 13 as the newest West Virginia-bred millionaire.

◆

Horsemen are the last line of defense against the imposing forces of the modern world. They are our conservation allies. The fight to save farms, agriculture and a way of life is being waged now! Last year enlightened that, as many of us prepare to do battle for the preservation of the sport's legacy.

Benefits of Owning a WV-Bred and/or -Sired racehorse
Some of the best incentives in the nation!

- A minimum of three accredited races are written every day at Charles Town exclusively for registered WV-bred and/or -sired horses.
- West Virginia has the only program in the country that permits horses to win state-bred races that do not count against the horse's lifetime open conditions.
- The WV Thoroughbred Development Fund distributes over $4.5 million to breeders, owners, and stallion owners of accredited WV-bred and/or -sired horses based the horse's annual earnings at Charles Town and Mountaineer Park racetracks.
- The West Virginia Breeders Classics pays out almost $1 million in purses for WV-bred and/or -sired horses. It is held annually on the second Saturday in October.
- $800,000 in purses are allocated for up to 16 WV accredited stakes races during the year.
- Supplemental Purse Awards of up to 10% of the winner's share of the purse to the owner, breeder, and/or sire owner of the accredited WV-bred and/or -sired winner.
- West Virginia offers year-round racing with approximately 300 race days per year.

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Chasing
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Playing by the rules

Stewards: Critical to the safety and success for participants, horse and human

By Betsy Burke Parker

They don't wear a zebra-striped uniform or wear a whistle, but they're referees just the same.

Racing referees.

Stewards enforce the rules of racing, responsible for enforcement and adjudication, safety and success. Pure and simple.

But a steward's job is anything but easy.

To start with, modern-day stewards are as well-trained and well-educated as any judge or official in any pro sport anywhere in the world. Steeplechasing is serious business, with serious money and serious implications if something goes wrong. To be sure, participants from hotwalkers to handicappers to horse owners agree that steeplechasing is a most pleasing and enjoyable business to be involved in – vocation as well as avocation for most, but the stewards of racing will tell you: they've got to get it right.

An accredited steward since 1995, Tad Zimmerman has had a long association with officiating for NSA. In addition, for the last three years, he's worked as a state steward at Virginia's Colonial Downs near Richmond.

At the racetrack as well as the jump meets, there are three stewards. They oversee all the other race officials – patrol judges (who act as "the eyes and the ears" of the stewards out on the racecourse), paddock judge, clerk of the scales, the veterinarians, the medical team and more.

When interference happens on the course, majority rules, Zimmerman explains. Once the panel rules on an infraction, "it is a consensus, no matter what. The stewards stand together.

Larry Curtis, Bill Gallo and Tad Zimmerman at the races in 2012. ©Tod Marks

"Sometimes you just don't have enough information to make a perfectly informed decision. Maybe the video was inconclusive," Zimmerman adds. In this case, "if you can't tell, leave it alone."

Zimmerman credits NSA director of racing Bill Gallo with raising the sport's level of professionalism in 1995 when he tapped onto the then-new Racing Officials Accreditation Program for flat racing.

"We piggybacked on the ROAP program," explains Gallo, who started with NSA 44 years ago, in 1977. Prospective stewards go through an intensive, week-long course, then complete a certain number of apprentice official stints before they're eligible to work as a top cop at a hunt meet. Accredited stewards complete continuing education coursework to stay apprised of new rules and trends.

There are certain qualities that lend to becoming a good steward, Zimmerman says – a sense of fairness, a willingness to listen, sharp observational skills and a thorough understanding of the actual rules of racing. But, more than anything, he stresses, "it takes a thick skin. Whatever a ruling is, whenever a question is asked, you're going to be on somebody's wrong side. You've got a two-horse situation, you may be wrong as far as somebody's concerned.

"These horsemen have got skin in the game. The riders have their health at stake. The trainers have their horses, and their careers, at stake. The owners have a lot of money and time invested.

"In the end, this is a competitive game, and there's a lot of passion and energy involved. The referee is, on occasion, going to take the brunt of frustration when you're making a ruling.

"Fortunately, the level of sportsmanship in jump racing remains high.

"You can't take it personally. Our horsemen give the stewards credit for making reasoned decisions even if they may disagree with a call."

"The bottom line is, we depend on a hardcore group of individuals," Gallo says of the pool of accredited officials that NSA assigns to the 30-some hunt meets each year. "They're very good at what they do. They serve NSA very well."

Tad Zimmerman on stewarding

- It's important to like people, care about horses and to be able to listen.
- You've got to take this job seriously because there's a lot of time and money invested, and horsemen expect a fair shake.
- It helps to have a good sense of humor, and, on occasion, to have a thick skin.

Stewards' Race Day Timeline

Day before, or at least 4 or 5 hours before paddock time: Walk the course/s. "In a perfect world," says NSA director of racing Bill Gallo, "all three stewards walk the course together, since they work as a team on race day."

The course walk is important because the stewards will double check every knot on every rope holding down every national fence tarp, and every notch in every timber fence. They check beacons, confirm starting points and address any issues like road crossings and spectator access points. "But, there's less and less problems these days because the whole game has gotten more professional," Gallo says.

Day of: The stewards meet with Gallo – race day stewards's secretary – to go through past performance form for the day – race by race, horse by horse. They make note of things like "returning to the races off a long layoff," or problems at the start in prior races, pull-ups, previous falls or unruly behavior, in both horses and riders.

About an hour before the first race: The stewards call an officials' meeting to talk to patrol judges, verify viewing points and announce scratches, new owners, changes of rider, silks, etc.

After that: The jockeys' meeting includes the racecourse physician and the EMTs on site, to discuss fall protocol, wave arounds and pull-up procedure. They explain the Quick Official protocol and point out the Quick Official contact person (usually in the pull-up area). This, Gallo says, has been a great time saver – riders that feel there's been interference lodge their objection as soon as they pull up – by radio to the tower, so officials can cue up replay video and begin dissecting that part of the race, stride by stride.

During the races: The stewards watch the action like hawks, studying the overall picture through their binoculars to see the entire race, front-runner or back-marker. It matters, Zimmerman says.

They watch for riders putting horses into spaces where no space exists (trying to "come up the inside" of a fence or on a turn to save strides, but causing a dangerous situation), or riders not working "to the best of their ability" to keep a horse straight running down to, jumping over, or galloping away from, a fence.

Wayne VanSant says the key indicator is a rider "moving" in the saddle, standing up abruptly to avoid clipping heels when

Greg Morris, Gus Brown and Charlie Fleischmann at the Legacy Chase at Shawan Downs. ©Tod Marks

Steward Tad Zimmerman gets jockey Sean McDermott's side of the story at the 2015 Virginia Gold Cup Races. ©Tod Marks

another horse slices in front of him, for instance, or sitting back to steady a horse that's been bumped.

Where are they? The stewards are usually together on the elevated tower. They may or may not go to the paddock between races. Sometimes, one steward watches the video monitors while the other two watch the live action through their field glasses.

It depends, Zimmerman says, on the space available on the stand and on the individual racecourse – blind spots and field of view play a critical role in deciding whose eyes are where.

After each race: All three stewards, plus Gallo, watch the video replay.

If there's a problem? Zimmerman explains that either the stewards see an incident and announce a stewards' inquiry, or a claim of foul is lodged by a rider, or both.

In either event, the stewards review the video and interview the riders as well as the patrol judge in the vicinity.

They then make a series of decisions – if there was interference. If yes, whether the interference affected the outcome of the race.

These two decisions need to be made without delay in order to determine if a horse should be disqualified and the placing altered before the race can be made official.

The decision of the stewards with regard to an incident occurring during the running of a race is final and cannot be appealed.

After the race is declared official, if there was interference, whether it affected the outcome of the race or not, a hearing will be held later that day with the riders involved. This hearing is to determine the cause of the interference.

If the interference is found to be accidental, and therefore beyond the control of the riders, no penalty will be imposed. If the Stewards determine that the interference was not accidental, the next question is whether it was careless or reckless riding.

"Careless" riding assumes no ill intent. However, it does mean that insufficient effort was made to avoid or mitigate the severity of the interference. A finding of careless riding results in a fine.

If the incident is caused by "reckless" riding, whether deemed intentional or not, it results in a large fine and possible suspension, depending on the severity of the interference and danger posed to other horses and riders.

At the end of the day: The stewards and the safety steward meet to go over the day's events. "This is a very long methodical process that seems to be working pretty well," Gallo adds. "It is a very sophisticated system."

A few days later: The process is streamlined and transparent, Gallo says – a detailed stewards' report goes up on the NSA website along with results from each meet.

"We have some really good people working in this game," Gallo concludes. "I've worked side by side with them for many years. They're performing a real service to our horsemen and our national organization."

NSA's Bill Gallo on stewarding

- The most important quality of a steward is to understand the rules of racing (a 70-page NSA book available online on the NSA website.)
- Second most important is to have a sense of fairness, to act in a fair, professional manner.
- You've got to be honest, (and) to make rulings that are in the best interest of racing.
- You need to hear both sides, not have a knee jerk reaction.
- You've got to be willing to do it, and be ready to make those hard calls.

— Classifieds —

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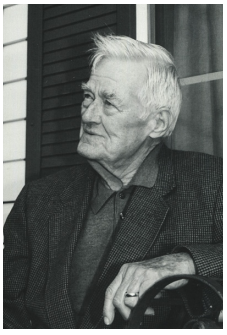
— Looking Back —

25 years ago

■ With only four days remaining in 1999, Citidancer's Maryland-bred daughter Hookedonthefeelin won Santa Anita's La Brea Stakes, earning the distinction as the final Grade 1 winner for the year, decade and century. Trained by Bob Baffert, the 3-year-old became the first Grade 1 winner for owner Mike Pegram. Bred by the Pons family's Country Life Farm of Bel Air, in partnership with Allison Flaherty and Helen Wells, she sold as a weanling at the Fasig-Tipton Midlantic December sale for $38,000 before heading to the Keeneland September yearling sale, where Baffert bought her for $110,000.

The first foal for the stakes-winning Allen's Prospect mare Prospective Joy, Hookedonthefeelin retired a five-time stakes winner of $488,554, sold as a broodmare twice for seven figures, the last time for $2.9 million, and produced four stakes horses from eight foals, led by Grade 1 winners (and producers) Pussycat Doll and Jimmy Creed, the latter at stud at Spendthrift Farm.

■ Tyson Gilpin, Virginia racing's elder statesman, took on a new role at age 80 as president of the local Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association.



BETSY PARKER

"His wits are keen, his vitality infectious," wrote Betsy Parker. "He's far from kicking back to ponder more than a half-century of active involvement in the Thoroughbred business. . ."

■ Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies-G1 winner Cash Run and her Grade 1-winning half-brother Forestry shined a spotlight on one of Maryland's most secluded Thoroughbred operations, Robert S. Evans' Courtland Farm in Easton.

Produced from Evans' Grade 1-winning homebred Shared Interest, by Pleasant Colony, the pair were bred in Kentucky but spent more than a year at Courtland under the care of farm manager Scott Warner.

■ Georganne Hale, newly-appointed acting racing secretary at Laurel and Pimlico, was believed to be the only woman in that job at a major race track in the country.

A lifelong horsewoman, Hale steadily climbed the career ladder within the Maryland Jockey Club after going to work on the frontside in 1984, and had been the assistant racing secretary since 1993. She was also racing secretary for the annual Timonium meet since 1987.

■ Howard Gentry, the former general manager of Virginia's famed Meadow Stud, the breeding and training operation that produced Secretariat and Riva Ridge, died at age 91. He began his career at Ellerslie Farm in Albemarle County, then owned by A.B. Hancock, before moving on in 1946 to Christopher Chenery's Meadow Stud in Doswell, where he would spend the next 30 years.

75 years ago

■ Changes were made to the Preakness Stakes. The purse was dropped to $50,000, a reduction of $25,000 from the previous year, and the date was moved to May 20.

Pimlico president Henry Parr III said the new date was chosen so that the Preakness would fall midway between the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes, the other legs of the "so-called Triple Crown." There would be a period of two weeks separating each race, and this "ideal" circumstance occasioned Parr's decision to abandon the customary policy of having the Preakness on the final day of the spring meeting (late May), which would leave a three-week period between the Derby and Preakness. Parr said it "would prove too long a layoff for the nation's best 3-year-olds."

King Ranch's Middleground headed the list of nominations. However, two horses "of considerable merit" were not found on the list: the nation's 2-year-old champions, Christopher T. Chenery's Hill Prince and Alfred Vanderbilt's Bed o' Roses.

Hill Prince was eventually nominated, and won the Preakness, defeating Kentucky Derby winner Middleground, who came back to win the Belmont.

■ Racing at Hialeah in January yielded Maryland-bred winners with a connection to Alfred Vanderbilt's Sagamore Farm. One was Miss Disco. Described by Joe Palmer as "never a great mare," Miss Disco, owned by Sidney Shupper, "has been getting a chunk of it now and then for her five seasons on the track." In her most recent outing, the 6-year-old daughter of Discovery and the Pompey mare Outdone "carried top weight of 122 pounds, and won nicely. . ."

A stakes winner at 3 and 4, Miss Disco found greatness in her second career. Her Hialeah victory was her 10th and last from 54 starts. Bred that spring to Rosemont, she produced the winning filly Hill Rose in 1951, who produced multiple stakes winner True North. Miss Disco's next six foals included classic winner and champion Bold Ruler, one of the greatest sires in history, as well as additional stakes winners Independence and Nasco. Six of her seven daughters were stakes producers. She was named Broodmare of the Year in 1958.

■ Dr. John Gadd, long one of Maryland's foremost veterinarians, announced the sale of his veterinary hospital at Towson to have more time to devote to his large animal practice.

Gadd went on to become one of Maryland's most respected equine practitioners, particularly in the area of reproduction. For many years he conducted independent research into the problem of genital tract infections in mares, and he developed a "deep suture" operation widely used on problem mares. He died at 81 in 1988.

10 years ago

■ The championship season of Graham Motion-trained Main Sequence revealed the toughness of the horse and the love and care he had along the way. Flaxman Holdings' homebred shipped from England to the United States in January 2014 for his 5-year-old campaign and within days was found to have pneumonia. "Antibiotics, ultrasounds and science helped stop the pneumonia – as did a little TLC," Joe Clancy reported. The chestnut gelding, described as "a gentleman" throughout his treatment, spent time at a clinic in New York before making his way to Motion's Fair Hill, Md., base a month later.

Main Sequence was back under tack in early March, won Monmouth Park's United Nations-G1 in July, and ran his record to four Grade 1 wins from four starts, concluding with the Breeders' Cup Turf-G1 at Santa Anita. A finalist for Horse of the Year, he earned honors as champion older horse and champion grass horse.

■ Owner/operator Greenwood ACRA announced New Jersey's Atlantic City Race Course was closing permanently, effective Jan. 16. The decision was "due to continuous business decline in the industry, the current regional economic climate and the absence of alternative revenue opportunities," said Greenwood ACRA president Joe Wilson in a press release. The news marked the end of an era for one of the region's most celebrated tracks.

■ *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred* editor Joe Clancy won the 2014 Eclipse Award for news writing for his article "Horse of a Lifetime," covering the Preakness Stakes, which focused on the connections of California Chrome, in particular trainer Art Sherman, their march through the Triple Crown and victory in the Preakness two weeks after taking the Kentucky Derby. It was Clancy's first Eclipse, and the fifth earned by a Maryland Horse Breeders Association publication – three for writing and two for photography.

In the last decade, three more have been won: Sandra McKee for feature/commentary in 2021; Tom Law, news/enterprise, 2022; and most recently, Scott Serio for his photograph of Skippylongstocking winning the Charles Town Classic that appeared in last October's issue (see the editorial on page 28).

■ Down Town Allen, with her namesake Allen Casey in a leadline class, won the "Top Moment of 2014" online poll in a landslide. Finishing second was "Steve Coburn visits California Chrome's grandsire Not For Love at Northview."

KATHERINE A. TURNBULL

In between winning two stakes within a month in the fall of 2014, 25-time winner and millionaire Down Town Allen took part in a leadline class with her namesake Allen Casey, son of owner, trainer and breeder John Casey.

50 years ago

■ Horses bred by E.P. Taylor posted new highs in wins (329) and earnings ($1,926,037) in a year, making the Windfields Farm owner the leading breeder in North America in 1974. He surpassed his previous high of $1,720,535 set in 1970, when largely represented by Nijinsky II. The nation's leading breeder in races won every year during the 1960s, Taylor missed that achievement in 1974, but the wins posted by horses of his breeding easily surpassed his best previous high of 308 in 1972.

Sixteen Taylor-breds won stakes in 1974 (13 for the first time), pushing his career total to 164 stakes winners.

Taylor's Northern Dancer got his ninth champion when 2-year-old Broadway Dancer, from the stallion's seventh crop, was honored in France. Northern Dancer stood his most recent season at the Chesapeake City, Md., farm for $25,000, with no return.

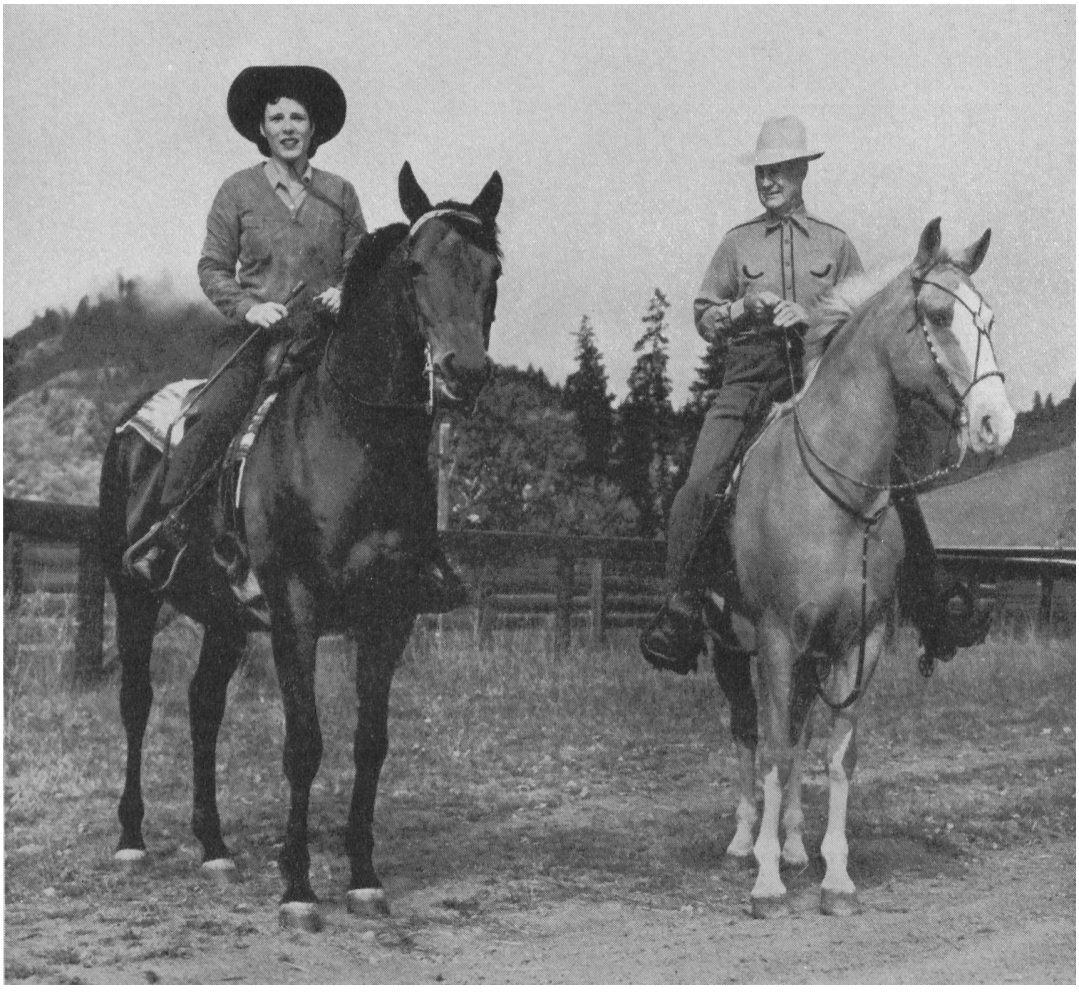
■ Bernard Daney, a Wilmington (Del.) certified public accountant relatively new to the Thoroughbred business but a lifelong fan, maintained he deserved little credit for the success of his stakes-winning 3-year-old filly Ramhyde, a Maryland-bred first cousin to the nation's champion 2-year-old filly Ruffian. "[Mr. and Mrs. Stuart S. Janney] bred her, Marshall Glass raised her and Jamie McCormick trains her. All I did was open a letter in which Mr. Janney informed me that he had a nice yearling filly for sale at a reasonable price." The daughter of Rambunctious out of Castle Hyde, by *Tulyar, won Bowie's Virginia Belle Stakes in January.

Graded stakes-placed later in the year, Ramhyde retired as a broodmare for Daney and wife Arlene after winning or placing 22 times in 35 starts. Her first named foal was a 1979 filly by Halo sold for $85,000 at Saratoga as a yearling. Purchased by Loblolly Stable and named Rowdy Angel, she produced Preakness winner Pine Bluff, Grade 1 winner Demons Begone, and the dam of Kentucky Derby winner Fusaichi Pegasus.

■ George Strawbridge Sr., a Philadelphia stockbroker with a lifelong devotion to steeplechasing, was elected president of the National Steeplechase and Hunt Association. A member of the association for more than 25 years, Strawbridge was active in the group's business affairs while also enjoying the reputation of a highly respected racing official. He succeeded Randolph Rouse, the president since 1971.

Another newcomer among the officers' ranks was John von Stade, of Peapack, N.J., elected as secretary. Members re-elected for one-year terms were Raymond Guest, chairman; J.H. Tyler McConnell, vice-president; and Donald Ross Jr., treasurer.

— Past Time —



Now that's a second career

From the January 1945 edition of *Maryland Horse* magazine, star racehorse Seabiscuit (left) goes for a hack with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Howard and a Palomino friend on their ranch in California. Seabiscuit had retired to stud five years earlier, after racing 89 times. Among his 33 wins was the 1938 Pimlico Special match race over Triple Crown winner War Admiral. This month's Next Chapters subject, Maryland-bred English Minister, is also a regular in Western tack at his new home in Minnesota.

From the Maryland Horse Library archives, which include bound printed editions of every *Maryland Horse* (first printed in 1936) and *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred* ever produced. The magazines can also be found online at archive.org. Just search Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred.

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GOLDEN LAD

Medaglia d'Oro - Broadway Gold, by Seeking the Gold

Top 3 Maryland sire of 2024; sire 2024 Maryland Juvenile Filly S. winner CAPRICE; GSW/track-record setting son of prominent sire MEDAGLIA d'ORO

$4,500 LF

ENGAGE

Into Mischief - Nefertiti, by Speightstown

GSW at 2 and multiple GSW lifetime of $800,000+; son of perennial leading sire INTO MISCHIEF; first crop yearlings sold up to $115,000; first crop race in 2025

$5,000 LF

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Elusive Quality - Evening Primrose, by Dayjur

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Dubawi (IRE) - Galikova (FR), by Galileo (IRE)

By Europe's leading sire DUBAWI who has 8 sons who have sired G1SWs; out of G1SW 1/2-sister to Champion GOLDIKOVA; first crop race in 2025

$2,000 LF

UNCLE LINO

Uncle Mo - Haysee, by Orientate

4th Leading sire in Maryland, incl. 2YO SWs CRAB DADDY and DO IT FOR MICHAEL; G1/record-setting son of UNCLE MO, out of a daughter of Broodmare of the Year OATSEE

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